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# AMERICAL

## JOURNAL

DEDICATED AS A LIVING MEMORIAL TO ALL VETERANS OF THE AMERICAL DIVISION

UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS



## DIRECTORY 2014 — 2016

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## Election Results Announced

The Nominating Committee announced the results of the 2016 ADVA national election. Lee Kaywork, Chairman, tabulated approximately 800 ballots that were returned. This represents about 25% of eligible voters.

Beginning July 1, 2016 the commander positions will be filled by Robert Cudworth, National Commander; Conrad (Connie) Steers, Senior Vice-Commander; and J. Reginald (Reggie) Horton, Junior Vice-Commander.

Filling the eleven elected positions on the Executive Council are Roy Abbott\*, Robert Anderson, Bob Cowles, Dave Eichhorn, Grant Finkbeiner, Jack Head, Gary Noller\*, Vern Pike\*. Rick Ropele, Bob Short, and Tim Vail. An asterisk (\*) denotes an incumbent that was elected to a second term.

The bylaw amendment was approved.

Elections are held every two years in even numbered years. Commanders are limited to one two-year term. Executive Council members have a two-year term and are limited to two consecutive two-year terms. National officers that are not elected are appointed by the incoming National Commander to serve at the discretion of the National Commander.

## 176th AHC Pilot Proposed To Receive Medal of Honor

The Ann Arbor News ran a feature story on October 29, 2015 about the proposed award of the Medal of Honor to Charles Kettles. Major Kettles piloted helicopters in 1967 while assigned to the 176th Assault Helicopter Company in the area of Duc Pho.

On May 15, 1967 enemy forces ambushed and pinned down a company of American soldiers in the Song Tra Cau riverbed. After an intense fight the outnumbered Americans received orders to break off and evacuate the combat zone. Extraction was made by helicopters of the 176th AHC. Initially it was thought that all Americans were safely out but a count showed that eight were still on the ground.

Kettles only had one passenger aboard his chopper so he turned around and returned to get the eight men on the ground. He made a surprise approach to the pickup zone but came under immediate enemy fire to include a mortar round that blew out the chopper's windshield. The Minuteman aircraft received several additional hits as it picked up the eagerly waiting Americans. Kettles struggled to get the now overloaded aircraft back into the air and out of the kill zone. The rescue was a success and Kettles is credited with saving the lives of the eight Americans.

The proposed Medal of Honor is an upgrade of the Distinguished Service Cross that Kettles previously received. Approval of the award must be made by the U.S. Congress and signed by the president. Ash Carter, Secretary of Defense, recently approved the award and sent it up the line for subsequent action.

At the time of this action the 176th AHC was flying in support of 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Separate), part of Task Force Oregon. The units relocated to the Duc Pho area the week previous to this action. They had been further south but were moved into

Quang Ngai province as part of the American build up that began in April 1967.

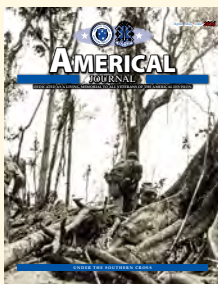
Units of Task Force Oregon formed the Americal Division in October 1967. The 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne joined other units of its parent division when they arrived in Vietnam. The 176th AHC remained with the Americal Division.

Major Kettles was 37 years old in 1967 and is now approaching his 86th birthday. He retired from the Army as a Lieutenant Colonel and continued a civilian career in aviation. He resides in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

The Americal Legacy Foundation will determine if Kettles' name should be added to the Medal of Honor pedestal at the Americal Monument at the National Infantry Museum at Ft. Benning. If so, Kettles' name will be the second addition since the monument was completed in 2010. The name of Donald Sloat was added in 2014.

## 26th Engineer Reunion Planned

The 26th Engineer Combat Battalion reunion is scheduled for 12-16 October 2016 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Headquarters is at the Hotel Elegante, 2886 S. Circle Dr. Host of the reunion is Jose Vargas, 2582 E. 109th Ave., Northglenn, Co. 80233. He may be contacted by email: jxvarga@centurylink.net or phone: 720-226-1623. The reunion coordinator's name is Linda Gordon who may be reached at 26th\_Engineers@outlook.com



**Cover:** Americal Infantrymen charge directly into the base of a banyan tree, an enemy position on Hill 260 on Bougainville, WWII. (National Archives photo)

The Americal Journal is the official publication of the Americal Division Veterans Association (ADVA). It is published each calendar quarter.

- Editor-In-Chief: Gary L. Noller
- Contributing Editor: David W. Taylor
- Creative Director: Lisa Anderson

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## Adjutant's Notes

By Roger Gilmore

New member gains for ADVA over this reporting period continue to be steady. We picked up twenty-six new members. Of these twenty-six new members, five joined as life members. Ten annual pay members upgraded to life membership during this quarter. We did bring in one new member who is a WWII veteran. PNC David Taylor sponsored 182nd Regiment veteran Bruce Bishop for his membership. Hats off to members Jack Haas, Mark Deam, Jim Boetel, John Stricklin, Dave Germaine, Dave Eichhorn, Dale Melton, Randy Rosengren, Tom Luedde, Jesse Mendoza, Russell Marceau and Stephen Monroe for their new member recruiting efforts this period.

We initiated another "re-recruiting" program mail out in early February. This mailing went to 423 former members with NC David Chrystal's invitation to rejoin. Again, all names are chosen at random and were not part of the first mailing. As of the writing of this article, we have picked up 83 former members. This equates to a nearly 20 percent response to the reinstatement solicitation program. Considering that the mailing preparation and postage costs are very low to mail the letters to these former members, the return on membership gains is very good. Another membership solicitation message was submitted to the Vietnam Veterans of America bi-monthly newsletter in late April.

May 2016 annual pay renewal notices went to the Richardson, Texas post office for mailing on April 27, 2016. By now all May 2016 annual pay members up for renewal should have the mailing. If you have not already done so, please mail your dues payment as soon as possible. If you are a May 2016 annual pay renewal and have not received a renewal notice, please contact me and I will re-mail your renewal notice and annual pay membership card. We still have a few annual pay members for the September 2015 and January 2016 renewal months I show as not having paid dues. Please check the renewal date on the back cover of this issue to see your renewal date, and send in your dues check if your renewal period is any of those listed above. If you have paid your dues, and your Americal Journal lists an incorrect renewal date, please contact me and I will research the issue.

As you look over this issue of the Taps listing, you will note the list contains more Vietnam Veterans than World War II veterans. This trend has been increasing the past few issues. We see names of those veterans we served with or have come to know through meetings at reunions, and are very saddened to see our fellow Vietnam Veterans leaving us at such an early age.

### ADVA MEMBERSHIP 30 April 2016

World War II	354
Vietnam	2,615
Cold War	7
Associate Members	208
Total Members	3,184

### New Members

**Raymond A. Biathrow**  
1/6th Inf  
Nashua, NH  
★ *Mark Deam*

**Bruce Bishop**  
182nd Inf Rgmt  
Belleair Beach, FL  
★ *PNC David W. Taylor*

**Gaylord Burley**  
3/16th Arty B Btry  
Hartford, SD  
★ *Self*

**John H. Burton**  
D/2/1st Inf  
Rock Hill, SC  
★ *John C. Stricklin*

**Phillip Cabrerros**  
TF Oregon (196th LIB)  
Canton, MI  
★ *Self*

**Ron Christian**  
HHC/1/52nd Inf  
Yorba Linda, CA  
★ *Jim Boetel*

**Stuart B. Clark, III**  
TF Oregon  
Haddon Twnship, NJ  
★ *Jack Haas*

**Tom Cunningham**  
D/2/1st Inf  
De Soto, MO  
★ *John C. Stricklin*

**Bill Donley**  
D/1/46th Inf  
Cape Coral, FL  
★ *Jack Haas*

**Edwin C. Holland**  
1/82nd Arty D Btry  
Fridley, MN  
★ *Self*

**John D. Hooper**  
C/1/6th Inf  
Oklahoma City, OK  
★ *Self*

**Peter Lutz**  
198th LIB HHC  
Ridgefield, CT  
★ *R. Marceau/S. Monroe*

**Thomas M. McPherson**  
A/5/46th Inf  
Slippery Rock, PA  
★ *Self*

**Jerome J. Merkle**  
198th LIB HHC  
Tonawanda, NY  
★ *Self*

**Cliff Miller**  
6/56th Arty  
Williamstown, NJ  
★ *Jack Haas*

**Joseph Pascale**  
C/1/6th Inf  
N Massapequa, NY  
★ *Mark Deam*

**James A. Pridemore**  
3/16th Arty A Btry  
Bean Station, TN  
★ *Dave Germaine*

**Paul M. Ramsperger**  
C/3/21st Inf  
Washington Twnship, NJ  
★ *Dave Eichhorn*

**Walter F. Schaub**  
5/46th Inf  
Oakville, MD  
★ *Dale Melton*

**Tom Stone**  
4/31st Inf  
Abilene, TX  
★ *Roger Gilmore*

**Samuel L. Wright**  
23rd S&T Bn Co B  
Arnold, MO  
★ *Self*

### New Paid Life Members

**Joseph C. Ach**  
D/5/46th Inf  
Leesburg, FL  
★ *Randy Rosengren*

**Winston Carbonneau**  
1/6th Inf  
Derby, VT  
★ *Tom Luedde*

**Michael H. Glascock**  
B/2/1st Inf  
Austin, TX  
★ *Jesse Mendoza*

**Michael A. Moore**  
4/21st Inf  
Augusta, GA  
★ *Self*

**Donald H. Thomas**  
3/82nd Arty  
Crownsville, MD  
★ *Self*

**Charlie Alaniz**  
123rd Avn Bn Co B  
Quemado, NM  
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

**Richard B. Allen**  
11th LIB  
DeRidder, LA  
★ *Self*

**Leonard A. Clapes**  
123rd Avn Bn  
San Antonio, NM  
★ *PNC Ronald Ward*

**David M. Czarnecki**  
6/11th Arty  
Cheektowaga, NY  
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

**Earl G. Dunkerly**  
A/4/21st Inf  
Bristol, TN  
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

**Rickie J. Guillot**  
23rd S&T Bn Co B  
New Iberia, LA  
★ *Claude Frazier*

**Tyler J. Harper**  
C/2/1st Inf  
Springfield, MO  
★ *Bill Bacon*

**Carl R. Jacob**  
D/2/1st Inf  
Charles City, IA  
★ *Paul Szalkowski*



**John May**  
123rd Avn Bn Co B  
Rosemead, CA  
★ PNC Larry Swank

**Thomas P. Ross**  
3/18th Arty  
Missoula, MT  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

### Re-instated Members

**Michael J. Aaron**  
23rd MP Co  
Clarion, PA  
★ Self

**Albert W. Ackerman, Jr.**  
196th LIB  
Wayne, PA  
★ PNC Larry Swank

**Russell R. Anderson**  
523rd Sig Bn Co C  
Oneida, TN  
★ Bill Boyatt

**Edward E. Arndt, Jr.**  
C/5/46th Inf  
Franklin, TN  
★ PNC David W. Taylor

**Harry C. Avant**  
C/4/3rd Inf  
Olive Branch, MS  
★ Larry Baker

**Jon Baker**  
D/5/46th Inf  
Houston, OH  
★ Ron Green

**William M. Bako**  
1/1st Cav C Trp  
Tonawanda, NY  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

**John Bates**  
C/5/46th Inf  
Glendale, CA  
★ Self

**Marcel A. Barcomb**  
HHC/1/52nd Inf  
Plattsburgh, NY  
★ PNC Rollie M. Castronova

**Wayne Barksdale**  
B/3/21st Inf  
Athens, AL  
★ Dave Eichhorn

**Jackie L. Bevel**  
A/2/1st Inf  
Kenedy, TX  
★ Bill Bacon

**James O. Billings**  
5/46th Inf  
Thurmond, NC  
★ Self

**Thomas Bittle**  
39th Engr Bn  
Neshanic Stn, NJ  
★ Glen Lippencott

**Larry Boetsch**  
A/1/6th Inf  
Bedford, TX  
★ Self

**Richard Bologna**  
196th LIB LRRP  
Buffalo, NY  
★ PNC Rollie M. Castronova

**Patrick Boyle**  
132nd ASHC  
Harleysville, PA  
★ Self

**Everett T. Brown**  
123rd Avn Bn  
Elizabethtown, KY  
★ PNC Larry Swank

**Melvin R. Burns**  
B/5/46th Inf  
Riverside, CA  
★ John P. Hofer

**Carl R. Burton**  
B/1/52nd Inf  
Troy, OH  
★ Conrad C. Geibel

**John C. Calhoun, Jr.**  
C/1/46th Inf  
Ware Shoals, SC  
★ Lanny Gilliland

**Michael J. Canci**  
39th Engrs Co B  
Staten Island, NY  
★ Anthony Amatulli

**George Case**  
196th LIB HHC  
Huntsville, AL  
★ Bennie Seals

**Norman Cerulli**  
D/1/20th Inf  
Pahrump, NV  
★ PNC Rollie M. Castronova

**Randal R. Chase**  
C/4/3rd Inf  
Warren, PA  
★ Bernie Chase

**Manuel D. Chavarria, Jr.**  
C/1/6th Inf  
Big Spring, TX  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

**Dennis Clark**  
B/1/52nd Inf  
Bloomfield, NY  
★ PNC Ronald Ward

**Martin L. Collins**  
5/46th Inf  
Thurmond, NC  
★ Conrad C. Geibel

**Jimmy Creech**  
E/2/1st Inf  
Howey in the Hills, FL  
★ Dave Eichhorn

**John W. Danforth, Jr.**  
C/5/46th Inf  
Tifton, GA  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

**Dennis Danneels**  
1/1st Cav A Trp  
Marine City, MI  
★ PNC David W. Taylor

**Michael R. Decker**  
D/4/3rd Inf  
Shelby Twnshp, MI  
★ Don Ballou

**Earl W. Evans**  
178th ASHC  
Daleville, IN  
★ Self

**King Ferguson**  
C/2/1st Inf  
N Charleston, SC  
★ Kenneth Ruesch

**William F. Fluke**  
1/1st Cav  
Upper Strasburg, PA  
★ Paul Stiff

**Daniel F. Flynn**  
198th LIB  
Marco Island, FL  
★ Bernie Chase

**Robert L. Forester**  
1/82nd Arty  
Haltom City, TX  
★ Roger Gilmore

**James A. Funkhouser**  
123rd Avn Bn  
Livingston, TX  
★ Self

**Gary Gardner**  
1/1st Cav A Trp  
Woodhaven, MI  
★ Bill Allen

**Gerard A. Gauthier, Jr.**  
178th ASHC  
Wharton, NJ  
★ Joe Emma

**James Girvin**  
3/1st Inf  
McKees Rocks, PA  
★ N. Embry

**Michael Gould**  
A/3/1st Inf  
Wayzata, MN  
★ PNC Rollie M. Castronova

**Thomas C. Geime**  
52nd MI Det  
Bellevue, WA  
★ Self

**Robert F. Griffin**  
B/4/21st Inf  
Little Rock, AR  
★ Nick Bacon

**Wayne Hales**  
C/2/1st Inf  
Chesapeake, Va  
★ James Gales

**Ray Hickman**  
B/1/20th Inf  
New Braunfels, TX  
★ PNC Dave Chrystal

**Frank P. Hofacker**  
3/18th Arty  
Pennsville, NJ  
★ Robert G. Pinto

**Dan Huffaker**  
11th LIB 6th Spt Bn  
The Woodlands, TX  
★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

**Dennis L. Jarvis**  
11th LIB  
Oviedo, FL  
★ Jerry Anderson

**Calvin R. Johnson**  
C/3/21st Inf  
Springfield, OR  
★ Dave Eichhorn

**Terry L. Kanzler**  
196th LIB  
Selah, WA  
★ Self

**David R. Kocan**  
D/2/1st Inf  
Parkville, MD  
★ PNC Rollie M. Castronova

**William J. Kring**  
174th Avn Co  
Niles, MI  
★ Ray Phillips

**Bob Lambert**  
C/3/21st Inf  
West Point, CA  
★ Dave Eichhorn

**Joel D. Lawing**  
C/3/1st Inf  
Chester, SC  
★ Gene Wilson

**Harris G. Louque, Jr.**  
B/5/46th Inf  
Gramercy, LA  
★ Ralph Brown

**Ralph Lyon**  
B/1/20th Inf  
Sandy Hook, KY  
★ Dan R. Young

**David Martin**  
23rd S&T Bn  
Englewood, FL  
★ Bob Kapp

**Joe McCormack**  
26th Engr Bn  
Germantown, TN  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

**Albert E. Miller**  
23rd MP Co  
Fayetteville, NC  
★ Rich Merlin

**John C. Mott**  
123rd Avn Bn  
Barre, VT  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

**Leandro Navarro, Jr.**  
D1/6th Inf  
Arlington, TX  
★ Tommy Acosta

**Richard H. Olson**  
D/1/46th Inf  
St. Paul, MN  
★ Don Ballou

**Jon Purvis**  
23rd MP Co  
Muscatine, IA  
★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

**Carl A. Ramella**  
D/4/31st Inf  
Belpre, OH  
★ Dave Eichhorn

**Lowell R. Robbins**  
3/82nd Arty HHB  
Lawton, OK  
★ Julian Humphries

**Lee S. Rodriguez**  
B/1/52nd Inf  
Midland, GA  
★ Dan R. Young

**Jim P. Rosson**  
1/52nd Inf  
Antlers, OK  
★ Art Cole

**Kenneth Schanke**  
A/5/46th Inf  
Deerfield Beach, FL  
★ PNC David W. Taylor

**James A. Sipe**  
C/4/31st Inf  
Palmyra, PA  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

**Raymond L. Sisneros**  
14th CAB HHC  
Santa Fe, NM  
★ Self

**Richard M. Sullivan**  
17th Cav H Trp  
Erie, PA  
★ Phil Haymaker

**Dale W. Szarka**  
E/4/3rd Inf (Recon)  
Solon, OH  
★ Self

**Tom Thiesen**  
A/1/20th Inf  
Lawton, IA  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

**Robert J. Thombs**  
A/1/46th Inf  
Irvington, NY  
★ PNC Rollie M. Castronova

**Michael Tierney**  
A/4/21st Inf  
Wayzata, MN  
★ PNC David W. Taylor

**Jim Triplett**  
C/1/46th Inf  
Bellingham, WA  
★ PNC David W. Taylor

**Daniel R. Vess**  
723rd Maint Bn HHC  
Gray Court, SC  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

**Walter Veto**  
A/1/20th Inf  
Racine, WI  
★ Self

**John F. Wachter**  
TF Oregon HHC  
Surprise, AZ  
★ Frank J. Davis

**James K. Wambold**  
6/11th Arty HHB  
West Chester, PA  
★ R. Thornton

**William J. Whitney**  
3/21st Inf  
Northfield, VT  
★ Self

**Jan Winters**  
A/1/20th Inf  
Highland, CA  
★ John W. Ewing

**Melvin Winters**  
132nd ASHC  
Midland Park, NJ  
★ Self

**Allen Yates**  
HHC/1/20th Inf  
Elkville, IL  
★ Bernie Carroll

**Shiu Young**  
A/4/21st Inf  
Parma Heights, OH  
★ PNC David W. Taylor

**Jim Zorens**  
5/46th Inf  
Douglasville, GA  
★ PNC David W. Taylor

**TAPS LISTING;  
MAY THEY REST IN  
PEACE**

### World War II Veterans

**William S. Coronella**  
121st Med Bn  
Somerville, MA  
April 13, 2016

**John Crnkovich \***  
132nd Inf Rgmt  
Granada Hills, Ca  
Date Unknown

**Carlo DePorto \***  
247th FA  
Gambriells, MD  
November 3, 2014

**Garrett L. Emberton\***  
246th FA  
Corsicana, TX  
Date Unknown

**Verne Frederickson**  
Unit Unknown  
Modesto, CA  
March 8, 2016

**Francis C. Harrold, Sr. \***  
Unit Unknown  
Modesto, CA  
March 8, 2016

**Charles Kleinhagen \***  
121st Med Bn  
Tamaqua, PA  
Date Unknown

**Joseph W. Riccardo \***  
132nd Inf Rgmt  
Berwyn, IL  
January 23, 2014

**Norman Walker \***  
246th FA HHB  
Totowa, NJ  
February 19, 2016

### Vietnam Veterans

**William S. Bacon \***  
A/2/1st Inf  
Center Point, TX  
February 27, 2016

**Dale J. Belke \***  
B/1/20th Inf  
Brodhead, WI  
April 24, 2016

**James Briscoe \***  
D/5/46th Inf  
Powderly, TX  
December 30, 2015

**Robert E. Clark \***  
A/4/3rd Inf  
Baltimore, MD  
Date Unknown

**Kenneth M. Familo**  
Unit Unknown  
Central Square, NY  
January 25, 2016

**Wayne L. Haynes**  
Unit Unknown  
Wallingford, CT  
April 20, 2016

**Jerry McGovern \***  
23rd MP Co  
Morrisville, PA  
June 23, 2014

**Peter R. Monteforte**  
C/4/21st Inf  
Poughkeepsie, NY  
January 22, 2016

**Federick J. Ragland \***  
A/1/20th Inf  
Tacoma, WA  
October 30, 2015

**MG Lloyd B. Ramsey\***  
Americal Division CG  
Pilot, VA  
February 23, 2016

**John R. Sartain, Jr. \***  
1/14th Arty C Btry  
Nashville, TN  
August 3, 2013

**Gary L. Schafer \***  
B/3/1st Inf  
Cleveland, SC  
October 2015

**Steven R. Shafer \***  
123rd Avn Bn A Co  
Kearns, UT  
October 2015

**Don Shooks**  
C/5/46th Inf  
Merritt Island, FL  
January 25, 2016

**James H. Snider \***  
8th Cav F Trp  
Seattle, WA  
December 15, 2015

**Newell Wininger \***  
196th LIB  
Leesburg, FL  
April 5, 2016

\* ADVA Member



## Americal Legacy Foundation Report

By Roger Gilmore, Chairman Board of Directors

### **Americal Legacy Foundation Web Site**

The blog link is on the site home page now and has some current information about the Fort Sill Artillery monument plans and latest developments about the design progress. As progress continues, we will post new information on this project. Under the About Us link, we now have a gallery of monument projects completed under the auspices of ADVA or ALF. Please continue to go to the web site at [www.americalfoundation.org](http://www.americalfoundation.org) and these links for the latest information on Foundation monument projects.

### **Americal Legacy Foundation 2016 Calendar**

Our goal for the 2016 edition of the Americal Legacy Foundation calendars to reach the \$20,000.00 in donations has been met and exceeded. As of this article, direct donations from the mailing plus donations received via the web site (Pay Pal) total just over \$21,000.00. Direct donations mailed to Foundation Director Gary Noller amount to \$19,625.00. The remainder is from donations taken via the web site or made by credit card through ADVA Product Sales manager Wayne Bryant. If you have yet to donate, or are able to mail an additional donation, it is not too late to pitch in. Donations can be mailed using the pre-addressed envelope mailed with the calendar. If your pre-addressed envelope is not handy, donations can be mailed to Foundation director Gary Noller at the following address:

Mr. Gary L. Noller  
P.O. Box 1268  
Center Point, TX 78010

If you prefer an on line option to donate, go to the Americal Legacy Foundation website (shown above) and use the link Donate. PayPal and credit cards are payment options.

### **Recent Grants / Donations**

The Foundation's most recent monument funding opportunity is a partial grant for construction and placement of a monument honoring deceased soldiers from the Fort Benning OCS class 509-68. This initiative was presented to the directors for consideration by Director Dave Taylor, a graduate of that OCS class. One of the names listed on the monument is an Americal Division soldier who was a tactical officer for the class. The monument is expected to be in place in late fall 2016, and will be located on post at the Officer Candidate School student battalion's "Walk of Honor. The Foundation is please to be a funding contributor for this monument.

### **Future Grant / Donation Programs**

Recently, the Foundation directors have been discussing options for placing new monuments honoring the legacy of the Americal Division. One monument plan under discussion is a program to place smaller monuments at national VA cemeteries. Currently, there are 134 national VA cemeteries in 40 states and Puerto Rico. Many of these cemeteries have a space set aside specifically for

monument placement. Some of the directors have visited local sites for ideas on monument size and material type. As we continue to discuss more plan specifics and our approach to placement locations, details will be provided in future articles.

In early April, Foundation directors voted to make a donation to the new National Museum of the United States Army. The museum construction site is near Fort Belvoir, Virginia. The museum offers varying contribution ranges, with corresponding recognition benefits. Directors are still in discussion about the donation level to be made. Donors will be recognized by a plaque placed in the Veterans' Hall donor wall in the museum. More details on this donation opportunity in future issues.

### **Americal Monument at Fort Sill, Oklahoma**

On February 3rd, Director Gary Noller and I traveled to Fort Sill for a meeting with the Willis Granite Company, the stone work contractor, and the concrete base contractor for a site visit with post Department of Public Works engineering staff. The purpose of the site visit was to confirm the concrete base design and layout specifications.

The design and layout review went well. The post engineer staff requested one change; the entry way sidewalk be extended by seventeen feet. Willis Granite made the necessary plan change, and the revised layout was approved by the Department of Public Works in mid March. Willis submitted text proofing documents to us for accuracy reviews. Director Dave Taylor and I completed proof reading the documents and requested a few minor changes. Those changes have been made, and the approved text documents mailed to Willis the end of April. As of the writing of this article, Willis expects to begin the actual etching work on the gray granite stone materials for the back pedestals in mid May. The black granite material for the Americal Division history centerpiece pedestal and the mediation bench are expected to arrive at Willis' shop in early June. More details on construction progress will be forth coming in the 3rd quarter edition of this publication. We will also keep members apprised of the progress through the Americal Legacy Foundation website blog.

### **WWII Memorial Fund**

Earlier this year, the Americal Legacy Foundation submitted a request to the ADVA Executive Council to vote on a request to transfer of the ADVA WWII Memorial Fund to the Foundation. These funds were held in a CD through Bank of America.

The reason for this request was to be able to fully utilize these funds through the Foundation's memorialization plans for the Americal Division's WWII legacy. Director Dave Taylor has several projects in mind devoted to the Americal WWII legacy. One project currently underway is a WWII photo collage collection, which will be put in place at the Americal Civic Center in Wakefield, Massachusetts. Future opportunities include a WWII display at the MacArthur Museum in Norfolk, Virginia.

The ADVA Executive Council approved this request in early March. The Bank of America CD matured in April, and Foundation Director Ron Ellis took the necessary steps to have the CD funds transferred to the Foundation bank account.

## ADVA Historians Meet at “LZ Madison”

By Les Hines & Dave Taylor

On Sunday, April 17, ADVA WWII Historian Dave Taylor arrived in Madison, Wisconsin and was hosted by John “Doc” Hofer and his lovely wife Beverly, for a great time of conversation, a tour of Madison’s VA Hospital, then some brats and local beer. Both Hofer and Taylor served in the 5th/46th Infantry Battalion in Vietnam.

Taylor brought with him all the 5th/46th S-2/S-3 Battalion Daily Journals which covered the activities of his battalion for the three years and three months the battalion was in the war. The Daily Journals covered approximately 21,000 pages and were the source documents for Taylor’s book, “Our War. The History and Sacrifices of an Infantry Battalion in the Vietnam War, 1968-1971” First published in 2011, the book is now in its third printing.

ADVA Vietnam Historian Les Hines expressed interest in obtaining the documents to digitize them for use by ADVA members. Hines has already digitized the S-2/S-3 reports for the 4th/3rd and 1st/52nd battalions in Vietnam. Les arrived in Madison the following day on Monday in the early afternoon. After loading the four large boxes of documents into Les’s van, it was time for Taylor and Hines to have a detailed discussion on each-others historical activities on behalf of the ADVA. By mid-afternoon it was time for Taylor to get on the road back to Ohio. Taylor told Hines



**Americal gunship now on display in the Wisconsin State Veterans Museum in Madison.**

he will make a renewed effort to search for Americal Vietnam files in our WWII Museum holdings which are currently in storage in Eldred, PA. The ADVA was required to move their materials from the Worcester, Massachusetts museum several years ago when the building was converted for other purposes.

Les Hines spent Monday with Doc Hofer who took him on a tour of Madison, including the VA Hospital, the lake north of the city and some fine Thai cuisine in town. On Tuesday morning Doc Hofer took Les on a guided tour of the Wisconsin State Veterans Museum. The museum was significant to Les because the museum had a UH-1C gunship that had fought some hard battles with the Americal Division’s 174th Assault Helicopter Company (The Sharks). Hofer, a mover and shaker in the Veteran community of Madison, had “all hands on deck” at the museum to meet with Hines.

Hines met with the museum director, Michael Telzrow and museum curator, Kevin Hampton. Hines presented them with an original 1970 unit album from the 16th Combat Aviation Group. This album included photos of 174th Assault Helicopter Company (AHC) pilots and crews that had flown the same helicopter which is now in the Madison Museum. Hines also provided several copies of a 174th video from Veterans of the 174th AHC. They had been provided to Hines by a two-tour Americal Division pilot, James McDaniel. These videos have scenes recorded that possibly show the same helicopter in the museum firing rockets in combat.

The museum was bustling and packed with young



**Meeting in John Hofer’s “Man Cave” ADVA Vietnam Historian Les Hines (left), John “Doc” Hofer (center) and ADVA WWII Historian Dave Taylor (right) review materials brought to Madison by Hines.**





**Photo of actual gunship on display in Madison Wisconsin, taken during the Vietnam War.**

school children on tours. Les received a tour from a 1st Air Cavalry Veteran pilot, by the name of Rick. He was a terrific guide who had worked on a base that Hines was familiar with at LZ English which was just south of the Americal area of operations. One of the tour guides he also bumped into was Bob Hesselbein. Hesselbein is President of the 17,000 member Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA). He was really in the “zone” presenting the Vietnam War to a group of 30-40 eight year olds. Seeing Hesselbein reminded Hines of his former Americal pilot, Mr. McCaig, who passed away earlier this year after a helicopter accident. He was co-founder of the VHPA along with another Americal pilot who had served with the 178th AHC.

During his trip to Madison Hines learned that Marty Heuer, a pilot who had flown the helicopter displayed in the Madison museum was going to come to the museum with boxes of items to donate to them. Marty is not only famous for being a gunship pilot in Vietnam, but he was part of a singing group that sang for officers of the Americal Division. The group had a couple of different names, but was most well-known as the “Four Majors and a Minor”. It is possible you can buy these audio recordings from different internet sites.

All in all, it was a productive visit to Madison, Wisconsin by your two ADVA Historians. We wish to sincerely thank John and Beverly Hofer for their wonderful hospitality.



**Marty Heuer, a former Shark pilot, represented the Americal Veterans when he presented a plaque to the Wisconsin State Veterans Museum at the dedication of the “Shark 157” helicopter on October 28, 2011. Marty is still heavily involved in the project and returned this year with additional boxes of historical materials for the museum.**



**Dear editor,**

The death of Bill Bacon on February 27, 2016 was a deep personal loss to me and all who knew him. Bill was the company commander of A 2/1 during the Kham Duc operations in the summer of 1970 and was one of the finest company commanders I have known during my 28 years of service. Bill grew up in a military family and a 1966 graduate of Texas A&M. These two factors instilled in him a great love of country and a high sense of duty, honor, loyalty, and dedication; traits that he exhibited his entire life. I think of him not only as a wonderful Army officer but as a wonderful human being and friend.



Bill had a promising military career ahead of him but this was cut short on July 30, 1970 when he was wounded leading his company in a fire fight against NVA. He was evacuated and began a long healing process which ended in him being given a medical discharge in February 1971. He became a strong supporter of the Americal Division Veterans Association and the Military Order of the Purple Heart; rising to positions of high responsibility in both organizations.

I last saw Bill during the Americal Division reunion in Houston, Texas. We enjoyed long conversations about our time in Vietnam and he expressed a desire to revisit Vietnam. Upon leaving Houston he presented one of his cypress wood candle holders to my wife and me. Typical Bill Bacon. I knew that desire to visit Vietnam would take place and it did. My last correspondence with Bill was a multi- page letter from him outlining where he visited, what changes had taken place. His letter ended on a somber note. His doctors had found a tumor on his brain and he wasn't looking forward to another long healing process.

In February this year I received word that Bill wanted to see me. I called his wife Debbie to see how he was doing. She told me the doctors had done all they could and Bill was home under hospice care. Two days later I got a phone call that he died. Bill was laid to rest in Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery on March 7, 2016. Saint Paul wrote "the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness." (2 Timothy 4:6-8). The same could be said about Bill Bacon.

Good bye my Friend. God bless and rest in peace.

COL Al Coleman, US Army (Ret)

Former Commander; 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry

**Dear editor,**

I am a member of the Americal Association. I went on-line the other day to the Americal site. I haven't used it in a while. Have you guys removed the Guest book? I use to troll through the entries trying to locate my old Vietnam buddies. If I'm just not finding the link to the guest book, please advise me how to find it. I wished we had a membership page to access to look for buddies. If you ever start one try to get members to update their profiles to include branch, unit and dates there. Would make it easier to locate people considering so many guys had the same names. Thanks for listening.

David Weaver; CaptainDLW@bellsouth.net

B Btry., 3/18th Arty; 1967-68.

## News Shorts

### MG Lloyd B. Ramsey (RIP)

MG (Ret.) Lloyd B. Ramsey, 97, of Roanoke, Virginia passed away on February 23, 2016. He commanded the Americal Division in Vietnam from June 1969 through March 1970. On March 18, 1970 he was seriously injured when his command and control helicopter crashed in the mountains west of Chu Lai. A rescue effort was successfully completed by members of 1/6th Infantry. Ramsey's injuries resulted in his retirement from the Army.

Ramsey was a long-time member of the ADVA and attended several reunions to include one in Topeka, Kansas in the early 1990s. He began his military career after graduating from the University of Kentucky in 1940. He served in North Africa during WWII and received a succession of promotions throughout his career. His awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Silver Star with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Bronze Star with V device and three Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Purple Heart with four Oak Leaf Cluster. He authored an autobiography under the title *A Memoir*.

### Memorial Highway Slated For Ohio

COLUMBUS—State Representative Jim Buchy (R-Greenville) announced the passage of Substitute



Senate Bill 182 by the Ohio House of Representatives, an omnibus bill that designates multiple memorial highways across the state. The legislation includes House Bill 348, a road-naming bill sponsored by Rep. Buchy, which names a portion of highway in Darke County after Specialist Robert L. Fowler Jr. and Private First Class Jack E. Beam. SP4 Fowler and PFC Beam were members of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade during the Vietnam War. They were both killed in action in 1966.

Under the bill, the portion of State Route 571, beginning at the southeastern boundary of Union City and ending at the western boundary of Greenville is designated as the "196th Light Infantry Brigade SP4 Robert L. Fowler Jr. and PFC Jack E. Beam Memorial Highway." "Honoring these brave soldiers for their sacrifices is appropriate given the heroic efforts of the men who served in the 196th Light Infantry Brigade," Rep. Buchy said. "Over the course of many years, countless men and women from western Ohio have selflessly sacrificed much in order to ensure freedom for our country. Continuing efforts to recognize their sacrifices is important." Substitute Senate Bill 182 will now return to the Ohio Senate for concurrence on the changes made by the House.

### ADVA Member Appears In Documentary Film

Life Member Nick J. Prevas Jr. appeared in "Maryland Vietnam War Stories," a three-hour documentary film by Maryland Public Television. The film aired on May 24, 25, and 26. Nick led 3rd Platoon, Co. C, and served as S-3/Air of the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry (11th LIB) in Vietnam in 1970. In his interview, Nick explained the unit's assignment within the Americal Division.

The film was produced in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. It features Maryland Vietnam veterans who tell the story of their service in that conflict. It will be shared with public television stations throughout the U.S. and overseas.

Nick's full-length interview will be available online, at the Maryland Historical Society (<http://www.mdhs.org>). Nick resides in Highland, MD; email [prevas05@yahoo.com](mailto:prevas05@yahoo.com).

### Article Features Men of Hawk Hill

Morton Dean reported on the Vietnam War for CBS News. During the war he reported on a January 17, 1971 Charger Dustoff mission originating from Hawk Hill that picked up three wounded Americans. Forty-five years later Dean tracked down the three wounded men and the Dustoff crew that evacuated them back to the 196th LIB aid station on Hawk Hill. His account of this effort was published in the December 2015 issue of *Air and Space Magazine* published by the Smithsonian. It can be found on the internet at <http://www.airspacemag.com/history-of-flight/lives-they-saved-vietnam-medevac-180957298/?no-ist> or by a GOOGLE search for [Morton Dean Hawk Hill].

### B/4/21/11 Veteran Publishes Autobiography

Slater Davis served with Co. B, 4/21st Infantry in 1970-71. He recently announced the publication of his book 349 Days. He says, "Everyone has a story to tell. 349 Days is my story. It's not my whole story, but it is a part of my story from a very significant time in my life. I take you from being drafted into the Army as a young husband with a child on the way in 1970, through my training, then the jungles and rice paddies of Vietnam, all the way to the 21st Century and the after effects of that year. 349 Days tells you about these experiences, and about the fears, loneliness, and joys that went with them." Details on how to purchase the book are at [www.slaterdavis.com](http://www.slaterdavis.com).

### LOCATOR REQUESTS

**Looking for:** Anyone who served in Co. C, 723rd. Maint. Bn. between September 1968 and April 1970. Contact: David Shaw, 217 Dewitt Ln., Apt. 116, Spring Lake, MI, 49456-1932. 616-842-1233

**Looking for:** Marvin Johnson who served with a Steve Reynolds in Vietnam (approximate time frame 1968-1971). I am Steve Reynolds' adopted son and would love to get them back in contact. Contact: Aaron Henao; [henao.aaron@yahoo.com](mailto:henao.aaron@yahoo.com); 713-298-1950.

**Looking for:** Anyone I served with in Third Platoon, Bravo Co, 1/6 198th LIB, from 12-69 to Sept 70. I was a Sgt E-5, nicknamed Sgt K. Currently, I am attempting to locate Doc Webb, Gary L White, Lt Winston Moody, Jesse Osborne and Jesse Stout. Of course, anybody else with which I served would be great. Contact: Tom Kuhar; [tjukuhar@comcast.net](mailto:tjukuhar@comcast.net); 609-412-582.

**Looking for:** Anyone who knew my grandfather, John A. Crowhurst, a WWII Americal veteran who served on Bougainville and during the occupation of Japan. He will be turning 98 this fall and we are hoping to find out if there are any other survivors from his unit in Northern California - or anywhere. Contact: Jean Rice; [LadyArwyn@yahoo.com](mailto:LadyArwyn@yahoo.com).

**Looking for:** SP4 Dennis Cogburn from Del Rio, TX and SP4 Jimmy Pascal from Pasadena, TX. Also looking for anyone with information about or anyone who belonged to A/1/82 ARTY who served in Chu Lai from 12/1968 through 12/1969. Contact: Anthony "Terry" Molea; [terra\\_molea@hotmail.com](mailto:terra_molea@hotmail.com); (225) 572-8168.

**Looking for:** Chester A. Fetner, company commander of F Toop, 17th CAV. We were wounded at the same time. Contact: Bud Stell; [lisadcobb@aol.com](mailto:lisadcobb@aol.com).

**Looking for:** Anyone with "D" Company 1st Bn. 20th. Infantry, 11th LIB. We have a new website at [www.delta120.com](http://www.delta120.com). Contact: Cliff Tholen; [woodcrew2@msn.com](mailto:woodcrew2@msn.com).

*2016 ADVA National Reunion  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
September 14 – 18*

**HOTEL**

The headquarters hotel is the Crowne Plaza Albuquerque conveniently located at 1901 University Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM, 87102. A room rate of \$90 per night plus 13% tax has been established for the reunion dates of September 14-18 inclusive. Reservations must be made directly with the hotel by calling 866-384-4934. You must specify that you want the special ADVA reunion rate at the time you make your reservation. The rate cannot be changed at time of check-in. Reservations must be made no later than August 20, 2016 to qualify for the special rate. The number of rooms held at the special rate is limited so make your reservations early. After August 20 or when all special rate rooms are reserved the hotel may offer additional rooms but only on a space available basis and at the regular hotel room rate. Ask the hotel about special rates for arrival before September 14 or departure after September 18. Room reservation includes up to two free breakfasts per day and free wireless service in guest rooms. The hotel has free on-site self-parking. Arrangements are being made for a free shuttle to and from the hotel for Thursday arrivals and Sunday departures only.

**UPDATED REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

Hotel registrations show that many people are coming in on Wednesday even though there are no set reunion events on Thursday. This has put some strain on hotel rooms for Wednesday night but at the time of this writing Wednesday rooms were still available. An alternate hotel, the MCM Elegante, is located just across the street from the Crowne Plaza if needed for overflow lodging. The nightly rates should be comparable. Notify Ronald Ellis if hotel says they are out of rooms.

**WEATHER AND ALTITUDE**

Albuquerque is known for its dry climate, bright sun, and large day-night temperature differentials. September is an excellent month to visit the area but be sure to bring a light jacket to wear in the early morning and when the sun has set. Daytime high may be as much as 80F but cooling to 55F very quickly at night. The altitude varies widely from 4,900 feet at the Rio Grand River downtown to 6,700 feet in the foothills of the Sandia Heights. If you take the aerial tram to the top of Sandia Peak you will enjoy a panoramic view from an elevation of 10,400 feet and much lower temperatures than in the city.

**THURSDAY — OPEN DAY FOR EVERYONE**

No group tour is planned for Thursday to allow everyone to plan their own excursions in the Albuquerque-Santa Fe area. There are many exciting things to see and do and with a little advance planning a very productive and enjoyable day can be arranged. Santa Fe is located about one hour north of Albuquerque via I-25. Beyond Santa Fe are attractions in Taos and Angel Fire. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial State Park in Angel Fire is a three hour drive from the hotel.

Albuquerque highlights: See the website at [www.visitalbuquerque.org](http://www.visitalbuquerque.org) for official Albuquerque Convention & Visitors Bureau information. They will mail you a free visitors guide upon request. Some popular Albuquerque attractions include the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Historic Old Town, Albuquerque Museum, Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, National Hispanic Cultural Center, Petroglyph National Monument, Sandia Peak Aerial Tramway, Turquoise Trail National Scenic Byway, and ABQ Biopark Zoo.

Santa Fe highlights: Santa Fe is about an hour north of Albuquerque on I-25. The New Mexico Rail Runner Express makes several trips between downtown stations in Albuquerque and Santa Fe. Upon arrival in Santa Fe a free shuttle provides transportation to several old town Santa Fe attractions. Information about Santa Fe may be found at [www.santafe.org](http://www.santafe.org), the official travel site of Santa Fe. Popular Santa Fe area sights include Loretto Chapel, Bandelier National Monument, Bataan Memorial Military Museum and Library, Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi, Santa Fe Plaza, New Mexico History Museum, Georgia O'Keefe Museum, and Palace of the Governors.

**FRIDAY GROUP TOUR**

A special group tour will begin loading buses at 8:30 AM on Friday, September 16. Tentative plans include stops at the Anderson – Abruzzo Albuquerque International Balloon Museum, the Unser Racing Museum, and the National Museum of Nuclear Science & History. These museums are not large but they have excellent quality and do a great job of depicting the diversity of Albuquerque. Lunch is included with the Friday tour and will be held at The Cooperage, a well known Albuquerque restaurant privately owned and operated for 40 years. After lunch the tour will proceed to the nearby New Mexico Veterans Memorial and hold the annual ADVA memorial service in honor of all departed veterans who served in the Americal Division. This memorial consists of a 25 acre park, museum, library, and amphitheater. It has many memorials dedicated to branches of service, wartime era, and military units. The tour will return to the hotel by 4:00 PM and the remainder of the evening will be open.

**SATURDAY MEETINGS AND BANQUET**

The annual membership meeting will be held on Saturday morning. Saturday afternoon is open for all to enjoy the day out or to visit in the hospitality room. The evening banquet will conclude the reunion activities for another year. The banquet offers a choice of entrees and has limited seating. Seat selection will be provided at the reunion so be sure to know who is in your group and provide this information when required.

**HELPFUL INFORMATION**

Please note that the Friday group tour will be within the city limits of Albuquerque and each stop other than lunch will be for 45 minutes or less. Each venue is 20 minutes or less in bus travel time but the buses will be loaded at six different locations. Reunion chairman is Ronald Ellis. Send him an e-mail at [re196thlib@aol.com](mailto:re196thlib@aol.com) or call him at 903-738-9897. Reunion registrations are to be sent to PNC Ron Ward, 280 Vance Rd., Protom, MO, 65733-6346. Please provide your phone number and e-mail address with your registration in case reunion staff needs to contact you about late changes in the schedule.





## ***ADVA 2016 Albuquerque Reunion Registration Form***

Please use this form to pay your registration fees and purchase event tickets. Make checks payable to ADVA 2016 Reunion. Send completed registration form and payment to PNC Ron Ward, 280 Vance Rd., Protom, MO, 65733-6346. Please include your e-mail address if you wish confirmation of your reservation to be sent to you. Make lodging reservations directly with the hotel at 866-384-4934.

MAIN ATTENDEE NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ UNIT/YRS: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

GUEST(S) NAMES(S): \_\_\_\_\_

ADVA MEMBER: ☐ YES ☐ NO 1ST TIME ATTENDING? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Registration Fee: Current member ADVA	\$20 _____	\$ _____
Registration Fee: Americal Veteran but non-member of ADVA	\$35 _____	\$ _____
This includes a one year membership in ADVA		
Each additional guest	\$20 x _____	number of guests \$ _____
Friday Tour and Lunch	\$50 x _____	number of tours \$ _____
Saturday Banquet	\$50 x _____	number of Prime Rib \$ _____
	\$50 x _____	number of Salmon \$ _____
	\$50 x _____	number of Vegetarian \$ _____

**Make check payable to ADVA 2016 Reunion**

**TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Do you plan to stay at the reunion hotel? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ DON'T KNOW

How do you plan to arrive in Albuquerque? ☐ CAR ☐ AIRPLANE ☐ OTHER

If you are flying, please list planned:

Arrival Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Arrival Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you require a mechanical lift to board a bus? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Explain any special accommodations or requests: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Send completed form and payment to PNC Ron Ward, 280 Vance Rd., Protom, MO, 65733-6346.**

## Guadalcanal Memoir: The Life, Times and Camera of Dr. Marion Miodus

By David W. Taylor

Marion Drogomin Mioduszewski was born to parents Dr. Felicia Cenciara Mioduszewski and Dr. Saturnin Mioduszewski, at the Woman's and Children's Hospital in Chicago on November 21, 1920.

Marion's father Saturnin had left Russian-occupied Poland with his mother in 1913, with help from the father, the local town's police chief, to prevent Saturnin from serving in the Czarist Army. The father died in 1902 but not before making plans to get all his children, starting with the oldest to the youngest, out of Poland. Saturnin was the last to leave with his mother. They settled in Chicago. Saturnin entered

the Chicago College of Dental Surgery, graduating in July of 1919.

In those late 1800's and early 1900's of Imperial Russia's occupation of Poland another drama was unfolding elsewhere in Poland. A printer by the name of Felix Cenciara became active in the printing of underground newspapers protesting the Russian rule of Poland. The Russian authorities started to close in on him and Felix, with his wife and two daughters, one of which was 5-year-old Felicia, left Warsaw in 1896 for the United States. The family ended up in Chicago and Felicia, a bright young girl, became a Doctor of Medicine from the University of Illinois in 1915 at a time when female doctors were quite rare. Both Doctors Felicia and Saturnin would marry and begin a life as parents and physicians.

Marion, with his sister, lived his early life in Chicago but in 1931 took a trip to Poland with his father. This was during the deep depression and Marion's mother Felicia was not pleased with the quality of education in public schools. Marion was sponsored by the Polish National Union to attend the Alliance Academy (High School/College) in Cambridge Springs, Pennsylvania from 1933 to 1937. He returned to Chicago and began his studies in pre-medicine.

War in Europe was on the horizon and on April 7, 1939 Marion enlisted in the 132nd Infantry Regiment of the Illinois National Guard's 33rd Infantry Division. He continued with his education, working during the summers and part-time as a bus boy in various Chicago restaurants.

On March 5, 1941 Marion's life, along with hundreds of thousands of other Americans, was interrupted when his unit was inducted into federal service. Marion and his unit were shipped to Camp Forrest near Tullahoma, Tennessee for the large war-training maneuvers which took part throughout the south of the United States. Marion was promoted to Section Sergeant and much of his time, along with others like him who only had a short amount of experience in the National Guard, was used to train draftees who were flowing into the Army as the country frantically tried to build up its military power.

On January 23, 1942, after the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Marion and the 132nd Regiment was shipped to Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania for further processing to have the correct inoculations and issued equipment, then left by train to the Port of New York where they became part of Task Force



**Marion as a new recruit with the Illinois National Guard, prior to national maneuvers in Tennessee (Source: Miodus family files)**





**Peep Troops using jeeps practice firing on New Caledonia using .50-caliber mounted machine guns. Note the side bracket that extends to ground to steady the jeep during firing (Source: National Archives)**

6814, which was destined to become the Americal Division.

The 132nd Regiment sailed on the US Transport San Cristobel down the east coast and through the Panama Canal to the Pacific Ocean. At the time his unit was told their destination was Java, to hold the island so the Army Air Corps could use it. It was a plausible story, so many believed it, even many years after the war Marion thought they had been headed to Java but switched destinations because Java had been conquered by the Japanese; but their destination, directed by the War Department before the task force sailed from New York, was actually the island of New Caledonia.

The Task Force arrived in Australia and Marion with two comrades were boarded in a private home in Ballarat for one week. From there it was off to New Caledonia. Marion's company was in Noumea for a short period of time then shipped by boat to the extreme north end of an island called Waco.

Marion found the training and routine patrol work to be monotonous. He heard of a unit being organized, a mobilized reconnaissance unit known as "The Peep Patrol". Being bored with the infantry he volunteered. He had to take a reduction in rank, back to private, which he accepted to be part of this new unit. He reported for duty in the town of La Foa, not far from the capital of Noumea.

As fate would have it, the commander of the platoon he was assigned to was a lieutenant who had been a sergeant, like Marion, in Company B of the 132nd and neither had cared for each other. Platoon leaders were supposed to read the outgoing mail of their soldiers and Marion did not want his platoon leader reading his mail so he wrote his letters home in

Polish. Those letters were censored at a far more distant post.

While stationed with the Headquarters Troop of the Mobile Combat & Reconnaissance Squadron (Peep Troops) stationed at La Foa, Marion became a close friend of Monsieur Felix Bernut, a New Caledonian citizen, who had a small ranch three miles from the Peep Troops. Marion bought a horse from Bernut for fifteen dollars and rode it during his off hours. When it came time to deploy to Guadalcanal, Marion gave the horse to Bernut's charming daughter, an attractive girl of 16-18 years. Marion remembered, "I think that is why Mr. Bernut and I got along so well, I did not make a play for his daughter, who was quite attractive"

In November, 1942, the Peep Troops and much of the Americal were shipped to Guadalcanal to relieve the 1st Marine Division, which was decimated from disease, fatigue and wounds. After 1-1/2 months of duty in the field Marion caught malaria and was sent to a rear echelon hospital unit.

While at the hospital in the later part of December 1942 and early January 1943, Marion went to check on some glasses he ordered for himself when he was in New Caledonia. After finding them he was informed he couldn't be in the infantry with such poor eyesight. That suited him just fine. He was transferred to the 20th Station Hospital which had just arrived on the island in the latter part of January, 1943.

Marion found the medical officers were a cut above the infantry officers he had reported to and working with them was more in tune with the medical training he had received before the



**Fighter planes on Henderson Field, Guadalcanal, a good place for Marion Miodus to bargain alcohol for 35mm camera film.  
(Source: Miodus family files)**

outbreak of war. Initially he was assigned on “outside detail”, which meant “doing the crud work” around the hospital. Then he took over as a night ward clerk. Fortunately the medical administrative officer was a former infantry sergeant that he knew very well when they were together in the 132nd Regiment. Because of Marion’s education, the admin officer urged him to get into the laboratory, which he did. The knowledge he acquired in war as a laboratory technician kept him in good stead later in life.

Marion was pressured to take out a \$10,000 government insurance policy by the Commander of the 20th Station Hospital, Colonel Latson, but he refused, citing that the monthly payments for that, plus other obligations from his small salary, would be too much. What Latson did not know is that Marion had some additional cash in a soldier finance account, from his father. His superior offered a promotion to Corporal if he’d take out the policy so he did. By the spring of 1944, after one year with the 20th Station Hospital, he was back, once again, to the rank of sergeant.

In the later part of 1943 Marion received from his father a single frame camera. It was a Mercury (Univex). Some of the Guadalcanal photos in this article were taken from that camera. Marion had done a bit of photography before the war but now had his first 35mm camera to increase his skills. The hospital pharmacy which was located next to his lab had a pharmacist who owned a Leica camera. He also had a “Leica Manual” so Marion spent a great deal of time reading up on the art of good photography. The 35mm film was easy to obtain, using the GI’s war-time system of “Bartering”.

Since their laboratory had alcohol, they diluted it for their use more than they were supposed to. With the extra amount of alcohol they had a good trading commodity for bartering. Some of the alcohol ended up on Henderson Field, Guadalcanal, with the Army Air Corps crews in exchange for 35mm film they carried for aerial pictures. Photographic

paper was obtained the same way and it was no problem to get other picture developing materials from the X-Ray department of the 20th Station Hospital.

Marion began taking numerous pictures of the men and facilities of the 20th Station Hospital.

By that time he was doing almost all of the parasitology work (blood analysis for parasites) and grew in his knowledge of the field, reading anything about it that he could find. The Army had gained a promising young future physician by sparing him the rigors of combat. When not engaged in his blood work he took as many photos as he could around the hospital and the island area beyond, when time allowed.

By this time Marion was performing almost all of the parasitological work at the hospital and was able to obtain much information from the authoritative books on the subject at the time,



**Photograph taken of T/4 Marion Miodus on Guadalcanal with a single frame Univex (Mercury) camera. It was then later enlarged from a roll of film that was smuggled back to the states in a shaving stick. Photos were subject to censoring as were letters (Source: Miodus family files)**



which he read from cover to cover (Parasitology is the study of parasites, their hosts, and the relationship between them). As he remembered many years later, “this accumulated knowledge and experience was to help me enormously”

In the early part of 1944 (the Americal was now on Bougainville), Marion, still on Guadalcanal, had the opportunity to see New Zealand. He was detailed to go to the island for a period of one week to show a Naval Hospital Unit how the 20th Station Hospital on Guadalcanal was doing “thick smears” for malaria. The assignment was actually a way for his supervisor to give him a rest. He reported once to the naval unit, gave them the instruction and never saw them again.

Auckland, New Zealand was a great change from the past two years of living in a jungle climate and Marion lost no time in “poking around”, staying at one of the leading hotels and drinking lots of warm beer. He met a young lady named “Pat” who showed him around the city with interesting spots he would not have seen. Marion, ever the budding doctor he would become, told her “you have the nicest set of teeth I have ever seen” only to be told, “no Yank, they are false, both the uppers and lowers, do you want to see?”

When returning from Auckland, New Zealand to his hospital on Guadalcanal, Marion and a buddy stopped in New Caledonia for a three-hour layover. He hitch-hiked to La Foa, north of Noumea and renewed his acquaintance with the Bernut family, from whom he had purchased the horse.

Back on Guadalcanal the island had become more quiet – there was less excitement and the lab crew started to grow causing the workload to be much less, all work was sub-divided and boredom began setting in. the original canvas tents erected during the fighting on the island were in horrible shape and were replaced by metal Quonset Huts.

Rotations to return to the States started to appear in early 1944 for men like Marion who had federalized to active duty straight from the National Guard units. Marion applied out of boredom but didn’t hit the “lottery” until early June. He left Guadalcanal by plane and arrived in San Francisco, California on June 8, 1944.

Due to the fact he was running a fever he was placed in Letterman Hospital in San Francisco. They determined it was a repeat of his



**Marion reading something other than a lab report, with his crew and equipment at the 20th Station Hospital, Guadalcanal (Source: Miodus family files)**



**Wars End: Army Technical Sergeant Marion Drogomin Miodus (Source: Miodus family files)**

bout with malaria while on Guadalcanal and was transferred to Shick General Hospital in Iowa. The fever quickly abated and he was given a two week pass. He returned to Chicago and never forgot the expression on his mother's face when he appeared on the porch of their house. He had not told her he was coming home and she was almost hysterical with joy. He had been away for 2-1/2 years. According to his mother, she knew it was her son because the dog always barked differently when he rang the doorbell.

After two week Marion returned to Shick General Hospital for further duties.

While in Chicago on leave, Marion made arrangements through a lawyer to start legal proceedings to have his name changed. The long name "Mioduszewski" was too difficult for most Americans to pronounce and he decided to get the change while he was still in the service, with the change to be "Miodus". That name change was accomplished in Chicago on October 3, 1944.

After being in various reassignment centers Marion Miodus was assigned to Beaumont General Hospital, a 5,000 bed military hospital in El Paso, Texas. While

at the hospital Sgt. Miodus was assigned to the bacteriology section and was in charge of bacteriology and parasitology analyses not only done for the hospital but for Public Health bacteriology for federal institutions and other smaller military hospitals in northwest Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

While at William Beaumont General Hospital Sergeant Miodus was able to attend the College of Mines in El Paso, taking a course in bacteriology. Finally, on September 23, 1945 Miodus was discharged from federal service after 4 years and 7 months of active duty and followed his dreams and aspirations into the medical field where he continued to dedicate his life's work.

*WWII Editor's Note:* Marion Miodus returned to Chicago after active duty and entered the University of Illinois College of Medicine (the same college his physician mother attended), where he earned his degree. He interned at St. Mary of Nazareth Hospital in Chicago. Doctor Miodus worked as a family physician, practicing in New Mexico and Texas for a short time, before establishing his practice in the Oblong, Illinois area (Crawford County). In addition







to his practice he had a small farm with horses. He was a member of the Crawford County Medical Society, Coroner of Crawford County from 1952-1956, president of the Crawford County Medical Society and also a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians and American Medical association.

Miodus suffered a heart attack at the young age of 57 on April 8, 1979, while throwing feed to horses from a barn loft. Dr. Miodus had a recurring heart condition having suffered a heart attack in 1972. His life of service to his fellow man was begun as a soldier of the Americal Division, whose transfer from the infantry to medicine helped save countless lives.



**Guadalcanal as seen through the lens of Miodus' camera: Natives who had come out of hiding in the jungle to the coastal area by Henderson Field after the Japanese were pushed back to the far end of the island; Japanese Zero plane shot down during the early months of fighting on the "canal"; examples of shrapnel from Japanese bombers during early fighting on the island, held by Miodus ; Movie theatre and entertainment stage used to boost the soldiers spirits after the heavy fighting had subsided; Miodus at Japanese ice plant taken over by Americans after the Henderson Field area was secured (Source: Miodus family files)**



## The Americal's WWII Commanders (Part II)

By David W. Taylor

(The 4th Quarter 2015 issue of the Americal Journal featured the biographical sketches of Americal division commanders Alexander "Sandy" Patch and Edmund Sebree. We now conclude these biographical sketches with the remaining three division commanders in WWII, John R. Hodge, Robert B. McClure and William H. Arnold)

### General John R. Hodge

The Americal's third division commander in World War II, the only one who would eventually rise to the rank of a four-star general, was John R. Hodge. John Reed Hodge was born on June 12, 1893 in Golconda, Illinois. He attended Southern Illinois Teachers College and the University of Illinois. After completing the U.S. Army Officer Candidate School at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, he entered military service as a second lieutenant of infantry in 1917. He served in World War I in France and Luxembourg.

Between wars Hodge taught military science at Mississippi State University from 1921-1925 and graduated from the Infantry School in 1926. After a posting to Hawaii, he graduated from the Command and General Staff School, the Army War College and the Air Corps Tactical School. At the beginning of World War II, Hodge was part of the staff of VII Corps. As a Brigadier General he began his combat career as part of the staff of General Joseph Lawton Collins in

the Guadalcanal campaign. Collins was commander of the 25th Infantry Division on Guadalcanal when "Sandy" Patch, the Americal's first commander, was the XIV Corps commander on the island and General Sebree commanded the Americal.

When General Sebree left for the United States to train, deploy and help lead the 35th Infantry Division in Europe as Assistant Division Commander, Hodge was selected to lead the Americal Division from May 29, 1943 (on Guadalcanal) to March 31, 1944 (which also covered the Americal's primary engagements with the enemy on Bougainville). His Bougainville command included facing the Japanese major attack on the Americal's and 37th's Infantry Divisions perimeter by part of the Japanese 17th Army (to include the Japanese 6th Division – responsible for the infamous "Rape of Nanking" China). Hodge took advantage of the strength of the American's interior lines and the Japanese suffered heavy casualties.

At the end of March 1944 Hodge was promoted to Major General and sent to take part in the Philippines Campaign. He was replaced by General Robert B. McClure who took command of the Americal in Bougainville. In 1945 Hodge served on Okinawa and was promoted to Lieutenant General, taking command of the XXIV Corps of the U.S. Tenth Army.

From September 1945 until 1948 he served concurrently as Commanding General of the XXIV Corps and also as Commander of American Forces and the Military Governor of South Korea under the U.S. Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK). Hodge took his XXIV Corps to the 38th Parallel, landing at Inchon on September 9, 1945 and accepted the surrender of all Japanese forces south of the 38th Parallel.

Initially Hodge dislike the Korean people and, after accepting the Japanese surrender, he placed key Japanese colonial administrators back in charge of the southern half of Korea, the Soviet Communists having taken control of the area north of the 38th Parallel, placing Korean Communist Kim II-Sung in charge. Hodge received very little guidance from the U.S. regarding post-WWII plans for Korea but eventually a fledgling democratic government was established under Syngman Rhee.

In 1948 after the Republic of Korea was established, Hodge returned to the U.S. to command the V Army Corps at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. After the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, he was named Commanding General of the U.S. Third Army, based in the U.S., not Korea. At the time the Third Army acted primarily as a command and training force for units in the U.S.

On July 5, 1953 Hodge received his 4th star and was made Chief, Army Field Forces, his last command (Army Field Forces would become Continental Army Command (CONARC) in 1955 and ultimately divided into Forces Command (FORSCOM) and Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) in 1973).

General John R. Hodge retired on June 30, 1953 after 36 years of continuous military service. He died in Washington D.C. on November 12, 1963 at





Walter Reed Hospital at the age of 70. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Hodge and his wife, Lydia Parson Hodge, who was four years older, had one child, Mary Lynn, who died in infancy in 1923. Hodge wife died in 1977.

## General Robert B. McClure

Robert B. McClure was born on September 15, 1896 in Rome, Georgia. He graduated from the New York Military Academy as Cadet First Captain in 1915. Entering the U.S. Naval Academy in 1916, he was unable to maintain the academic achievements necessary to remain in the academy. He subsequently enlisted in the U.S. Army.

McClure was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant and fought in World War I with the 26th Infantry Division on the Western Front and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions at Bellieu Bois on October 27, 1918 during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. He remained in the Army following the end of World War I and was stationed in Tientsin, China with the 15th Infantry Regiment from 1927 to 1933, becoming fluent in Chinese.

One of McClure's fellow officers in China was Albert Wedemeyer, under whom he would serve during the later stages of World War II. He entered the Army War College in 1938, where he made the acquaintance of Joe Collins, an instructor at the college at the time. After graduation, McClure then spent time on the staff of the 25th Infantry Division as the division's G-4, in charge of Logistics and Supply.

When Collins was made commander of the 25th Infantry Division in 1942, he made McClure commander of one of the division's regiments, the 35th Infantry Regiment. McClure led the regiment during the Guadalcanal and New Georgia campaigns, as well as during the capture of Vella Lavella. He then spent time as the Assistant Division Commander to Collins, and in 1943 he returned to the United States as a Major General, and was placed in command of the 84th Division. After six months of preparing the division for combat in the European Theatre of Operations, he returned to the Solomon Islands as Commander of the Americal Division on Bougainville from April 1, 1944 to November 4, 1944.

McClure was then sent back to China to act as Chief of Staff to General Albert Wedemeyer, his former comrade in their old China days with the 15th Infantry Regiment. Wedemeyer had replaced General Joe Stilwell as commander of United States Forces in China. Shortly after his arrival in China, McClure was sent into the field and made commander of the Chinese Combat Command, remaining in that capacity until the end of World War II. He was twice awarded the Distinguished Service Medal in the war.

In December 1950, with heavy fighting on the Korean Peninsula, the commander of the 2nd Infantry Division, General Laurence Keiser, was relieved of command for perceived poor performance during the battle of the Ch'ongch'on River. General McClure was placed in command of the division. The division, previously part of the IX Corps, was redeployed to X Corps and came under the jurisdiction of Major General Edward Almond, the Corps Commander.

Almond began to be critical of McClure's leadership, citing a "lack of supervision" in reports back to the then commander of Eighth Army, Lieutenant General Matthew Ridgeway. Ridgeway had his doubts about Almond but differed to placing any doubts due to General MacArthur thinking high of Almond. Almond also was not popular with the Marine General for his arrogance and ignorance of amphibious operations. After a period of refitting, McClure's 2nd Infantry Division was ordered to Wonju, which was deemed by Ridgeway to be "second in importance only to Seoul" in tactical importance. During the battle for Wonju, McClure found his position to be increasingly indefensible especially when flanking South Korean troops were overrun by the North Korean People's Army. He ordered his division to withdraw to a position much further to the rear than agreed upon by Almond, who was angered by McClure's disobedience. After little more than a month as divisional commander, McClure was relieved of command on the grounds of "poor leadership". He was replaced as commander of the division by Major General Clark L. Ruffner, who was Almond's Chief of Staff of the X Corps. This move was endorsed by Ridgeway.

Following his dismissal, McClure commanded the 6th Infantry Division, which was then based at Fort Ord in California. McClure retired from the Army in 1954. In 1956 he was awarded his third Distinguished Service Medal for his service during the Cold War.

Robert B. McClure had served in three wars, WWI, WWII and Korea and commanded four infantry divisions in addition to the Chinese Combat Command. He died on September 15, 1973 at the age of 77 and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery, in Virginia.



## General William H. Arnold

William H. Arnold was born in Dyersburg, Tennessee on January 18, 1901. Always proud of his Tennessee upbringing, Arnold looked to the military as a passport to adventure. At the outbreak of WWII Arnold enlisted in the Army at the age of 16. His mother squelched his early bid for the military. Later, a congressman on Arnold's paper route offered him an appointment to West Point. Not only was this a passport to the Army, it was a rare opportunity for him to attend college.

In 1924 he graduated in the top-third of his class from the United States Military Academy. As a second lieutenant in the infantry, he was assigned to Jefferson Barracks on the Mississippi River at Lemay, Missouri, south of St. Louis. It was an important and highly active U.S. Army installation from 1826 through 1946.

In 1928 he graduated from the Infantry Officers Course at Fort Benning, Georgia. From 1928 to 1930 he was assigned to the 21st Infantry Regiment at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; then back to the 6th Infantry at Jefferson Barracks. Then Arnold was assigned as Training and Operations Officer, S-3 for the 15th Infantry Regiment in Tientsin, China from 1934 to 1936.

When the 15th regiment left China Arnold went to the 11th Infantry at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. This was followed by the Command and General Staff College in 1937-1938. After graduation, he was assigned to Fort Benning at various assignments including company commander in the 29th Infantry at Fort Benning.

As the war neared, Arnold became General Oscar W. Griswold's aide. He subsequently followed General Griswold to the 4th Motorized Division, then the IV Corps headquartered at Fort Lewis, Washington, where he was appointed the Assistant Chief of Staff for Personnel in November 1941 and in February 1942 he was appointed IV Corps Assistant Chief of Staff for Training and Operations, G-3.

In April 1943, General Griswold was appointed commander of the XIV Corps at Guadalcanal and Arnold joined the general as his Chief of Staff. Arnold was promoted to Brigadier General in September, 1943 and, as Chief of Staff of the XIV Corps, supervised the planning and execution of combat operations in Guadalcanal, New Georgia and Bougainville.

In November, 1944 Arnold was promoted to Major General and assigned to command the Americal Army Division on November 4, 1944, serving as its commander until December 12, 1945 upon the division's inactivation after occupation duties in Japan. He led the division throughout the actions it was assigned in the Philippines, primarily with actions on Leyte and the invasion and liberation of the island of Cebu. On August 28, 1945 Arnold accepted the surrender of Japanese forces on Cebu, with over 10,000 of the enemy surrendering in a matter of days. The surrender on August 28th was days before MacArthur's official acceptance of the Japanese surrender. He was told by MacArthur to delay the formal surrender until MacArthur accepted the terms

but Arnold, not wanting to give the Japanese high command on Cebu any reason to be suspect, went ahead with the surrender.

Arnold continued his command of the Americal through the occupation of Japan until the Division was deactivated at Fort Lewis, Washington in December 1945.

Arnold continued his service after the war as a Major General. He first occupied various positions in Washington including Deputy Director of Plans and Operations and Acting Comptroller of the Army.

From 1950 to 1952 he served as commander of the Joint Military Mission for Aid to Turkey (JMMAT) where he helped organize the Turkish Brigade that fought so well in Korea. In 1952, promoted the Lieutenant General (3-star), he was assigned as commander of U.S. Forces Austria, serving until 1955. Arnold was then named Commander of the 5th United States Army headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, where he served until his 1961 retirement. After making many friends and acquaintances in the Chicago area, Arnold and his wife made nearby Lake Forest their retirement home.

General Arnold's awards and decorations include many foreign decorations and multiple awards of the Distinguished Service Medal, including two for World War II, the Silver Star, two awards of the Legion of Merit, two bronze stars and the Air Medal.

Arnold and his wife settled into retirement in Illinois. His wife succumbed to cancer on August 22, 1976 and the general lost the desire to live. He died of a broken heart one month later on September 30, 1976. The Arnolds are buried at Fort Sheridan, Illinois.







*"...Here the backbone of your armed forces, the boiled down essence of combat, the guy who slugs it out personally with the rifle and bayonet; Here is the man who is always too hot, too cold, too wet, too dry, too exhausted, too hungry, too scared, but who still plugs ahead to his unknown destination. Where this unassuming individual stops, there is the front line of battle. If he gets ahead, we win; if they run over him, we lose..."*

**General Joseph W. Stilwell**



## Memoir on Service in the Caribbean

By Benny Gamino

We are all getting older. I will be 80-years-old on June 18 of this year.

I was stationed in Puerto Rico in 1955 and at Ft. Kobbe, Panama Canal Zone, in 1956-57. I was assigned to the 23rd Infantry Division and am a long-time member of the ADVA. I wrote an article that was published in the Oct-Nov-Dec 2010 issue of the Americal Journal.

A couple of years ago a staff member of the journal called me and asked my thoughts of service in Panama. I am sorry to say that at that time I didn't know what to say.

To me Panama was a country of haves and have nots with nothing in between. It was a very corrupt country. I remember in Panama City a big man all dressed in a white suit and a big white hat. People would run to him like he was a god just for a few pennies. He seemed to enjoy that in the wrong way. I remember men and women urinating on the sidewalks and letting it run down to the gutter. I wonder if things have ever changed there.

I have talked to people who have taken cruises through the Panama Canal and they say how wonderful it was. I wonder if they ever see any of what really goes on outside of the canal cruise. They are making the locks wider for bigger ships to pass through. When I was there some of the ships were scraping through the locks.

Panama City was on one side of the locks and Fort Kobbe was on the other side. At times we would have to wait an hour or so when the bridge was raised for the ships going through the locks. When the ship passed the bridge was lowered and we could pass.

It is too bad that only seven cold war veterans are members of the ADVA. I enjoy reading the journal and have great respect for the combat veterans who write about their time in the Army. I hope it helps them to write about it.

About a month ago I talked with my wife about a court martial that I remember. It happened while I was assigned to the 518 Engineer Company at Ft. Kobbe. A PFC B. hit our Plt. Sgt. P. with his fist for whatever reason. The two never got along and Sgt. P. was always riding PFC B. I happened to be in the area when the incident happened. PFC B. was sent to a court martial and I was called as a witness to the incident. When I was called to the witness stand I was asked if I saw PFC B. hit Sgt. P. I tried to explain the history between the two. I was ordered by the court martial board to answer the question with either a yes or a no. I answered yes that I say PFC B. hit Sgt. P.

After I got off the witness stand I never say PFC B. again. I often wonder what happened to him. The next day or so I saw Sgt. P. in our platoon barracks. He was packing up all his gear. He told me that he was being transferred out of our company but he did not say where he was going. Every soldier knows to

follow orders and for sure never hit an officer or NCO. But at times tempers fly and bad things happen. I guess everyone handles stress in different ways.

On a happier side of thoughts of my service there was something that happened when I was stationed in Puerto Rico in 1955. There was a soup restaurant on top of a small hill. The building was long and narrow. Inside there was a counter with stools the whole length of the building. Behind the counter were shelves of cans of soup. It seemed like the cans came from all over the world. A couple of guys and me would go there once in a while to try different soups.

When we arrived in Panama City we ate at an Italian restaurant pizza place. This restaurant was also long and narrow with booths along both sides of the walls. At the counter where we ordered the food we could see the Dutch ovens behind the counter. We could watch while our food was being prepared. As long as we ordered an Italian meal we got good food. But it was not so good if we did not order an Italian meal. It was a nice place to hang out once in a while.

As we get older a lot of our memories of our service will fade away but then something is said or done that makes them come right back. Some thing we would like to see fade away entirely but they won't. That is all part of life.



History: The 23rd Infantry Division was activated in the Panama Canal Zone on 2 December 1954. It acquired the lineage, heraldry, honors and traditions of the Americal Division of World War II. The division occupied a joint headquarters with HQ, U.S. Army Caribbean (USARCARIB) at Fort Amador, Canal Zone. The commander of USARCARIB also commanded the 23rd Infantry Division. The mission of U.S. Army Caribbean was to "Keep the art of jungle warfare alive in the Army". The 23rd Infantry Division supported USARCARIB in its mission as well as to protect the Panama Canal and the Caribbean Basin during the Cold War.

Principle infantry units of the division were the 33rd Infantry Regiment at Fort Kobbe, Panama Canal Zone; the 65th Infantry Regiment at Camp Losey, Puerto Rico, U.S. Army Forces Antilles, and Military District of Puerto Rico; and the 29th Infantry Regiment at Fort Benning, Georgia. The division did not serve in combat during this period. The division was inactivated 10 April 1956 at Fort Amador, Canal Zone.



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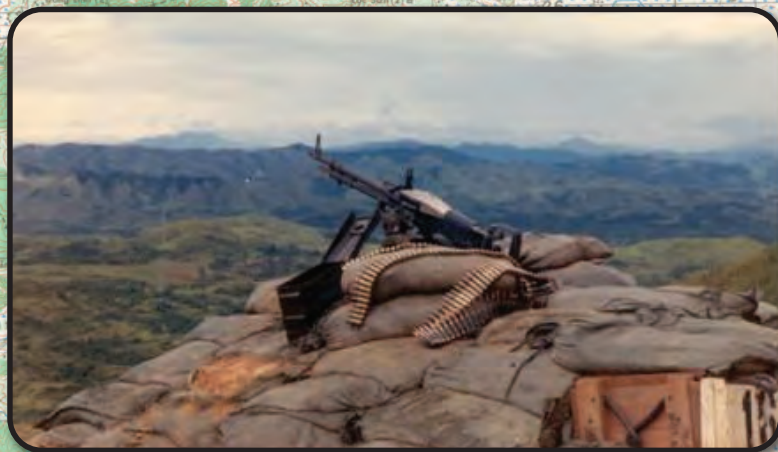
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## CHAPTER 17

### I'M GOING HOME (Part 1)

© By Andy Olints

[Continuation from previous editions of the Americal Journal – Editor]

There was a rumor going around the company area that troops were being pulled out of Vietnam early. Some guys were getting sent home two weeks before their one-year tour in Vietnam was up. On April 30, 1971, I was told to report to the company office, but I had no idea why. I opened the door and two clerks and an officer all said at once, "You're going home." I didn't say anything. There was no joy, no words. I could remember just standing there and saying to myself, "You have to stay alive for four more days and then you can go home." I was then told that I had a thirty-one day early-out of Vietnam. That meant I had completed a tour in Vietnam of ten months and twenty-nine days. I was given some papers and told that starting the next day I could begin to process out of Vietnam. That night I went to the NCO club and sipped on a drink all night. I kept looking at the door and hoped that some Viet Cong didn't throw a hand grenade through it. I didn't sleep very well just thinking that if I could stay alive, then I could go home.

On May 1, 1971, the first thing I had to do was turn in my M16 and my pack. It seemed like a long time ago that I had been in this same room getting my M16 and pack. I could remember how someone showed me how to tie my pack to a frame. Then someone said I needed at least six canteens for water. Another person told me how much ammo to take with me. But on May 1, I was not the new guy any more. I was going home.

When I was first assigned to my platoon I didn't have a hunting knife. One of the guys in the platoon was going home so he gave me his knife. Now that I was going home, I decided to give my knife to a new guy - big mistake. I wish I had taken that knife home with me. I kept my knife in a leather holder, and both the knife and holder were attached to my belt. The only time I didn't have my knife on me was the time I spent in the hospital. I used that knife for almost every meal, and I also used it to cut some tree branches. I even got to kill about two hundred leeches with the knife. I had heard rumors that if a soldier tried to take his knife home, someone at airport customs would take it. Also, I heard that it was impossible to mail a knife home because the post office X-rayed all packages sent out of Vietnam and would have confiscated the knife. So I gave the knife away, but I sure wish I had kept it.

While I was in the supply room preparing to go home, I got some new jungle fatigues and boots. For

the first time in ten months I got to put on a pair of underwear. Did that feel different!

My next step to processing out of Vietnam was to go to the Battalion Awards building. I showed my paperwork for processing out to one of the clerks and he told me he would look up my name. The first award I received was a piece of paper that said: Type of award - Combat Infantryman Badge. The Combat Infantryman Badge, better known as the CIB, was respected and cherished by everyone who received one. All I had to do to receive a CIB was to spend eleven months of my life in the States training to be an infantryman and then go to a war zone and spend time out in the field having the enemy shoot at me. When I see another soldier wearing a CIB I always have the greatest respect for him. However, the Army never just handed you a CIB; you had to buy it at the Post Exchange.

My next award was the Army Commendation Medal. I was given an actual medal and a piece of paper that stated that I had received this award for Meritorious Achievement in the Republic of Vietnam. Most infantrymen received this medal if they stayed in the field for at least three months.

I next received a paper that said: General Orders - Award- Purple Heart for wounds received in combat. On this paper was a short list of men who were also wounded with me and who were medevaced to the same hospital on December 7, 1970: George Salcido, Robert Stainton, Freddie Walker, Peter Detef, and Sexton Vann.

Along with the General Orders paper, I received a plastic folder containing a document with a printed Purple Heart on it. This document stated that Andrew Olints had been awarded a Purple Heart for wounds received in action. This document is very impressive to look at and I still cherish it. I also received the Purple Heart Medal to take home. Looking at a Purple Heart is one thing, but holding it in your hands is something special. It's quite unbelievable to know that I was one of the many men who were wounded and who received this medal.

On the way out of the battalion awards building I met a clerk by the name of Bill Haun. Bill told me that I had to go to Division Awards. Bill never told me why I had to go there so I didn't have any idea of what was to happen. When I entered the door at Division Awards I noticed two clerks sitting behind desks. They were typing and talking to each other. I know they saw me when I walked in, but they still made me wait till they were ready to get up and walk over to me. I showed them my orders to go home and they still said nothing to me. Both clerks walked over to a cabinet where I think they looked up my name. Then one clerk walked over to a large steel cabinet and got out two green plastic folders and put some documents in both of



them. Then from twelve feet away he yelled, "Catch," and then threw the plastic folders over to me like he was throwing a Frisbee. On the other side of the room, the other clerk was at a different cabinet and he also yelled, "Catch," as he threw over two black cases about one inch thick, three inches wide and six inches long. Then both clerks went back to their typewriters and continued typing and talking. Not one of them said another word to me.

As I walked out of the door of Division Awards I had to walk down some wooden steps. I decided to sit down on the steps to see what was inside the green folders. I was shocked when I opened up the first folder. The first page I looked at said: The Bronze Star Medal to Andrew Olints for Heroism in Ground Combat on December 7, 1970. I very much remembered December 7. My first thoughts were that my whole squad saw a lot of action that day. I then looked at the other half of the folder where there was a written summary of what I had done on December 7 to receive this medal. The summary said that Sergeant Olints rallied his squad for an on-line assault against enemy forces and that Sergeant Olints and his squad, were under heavy enemy small-arms fire. I remember saying to myself, "Some of this is true, but I didn't do anything different from the other guys in my squad on that day." December 7 was one long day with lots of contact with the enemy. I was hoping that everyone in the squad had received this same Bronze Star award that I got. I sat there alone with no one to talk to. At that time it would have been nice to know if the other guys in the squad had received some recognition for their actions that day.

While I was still sitting on the steps, I opened up the black case that had the Bronze Star Medal in it. On the Bronze Star Medal was a little "V" which stood for "Valor". Thirty-nine years later I still

remember sitting on those steps and seeing that Bronze Star. I was very much surprised to receive the Bronze Star.

When I opened up the second green plastic folder, I was even more surprised than when I had opened up the first folder. There was this very impressive document that said: "Sergeant Andrew Olints is awarded the Silver Star for Gallantry in Action in the Republic of Vietnam on 15 February 1971." I was shocked. February 15 was the day my squad walked into an ambush where two point men in front of me got wounded and Lt. Schmidt walking behind me also got wounded.

On the opposite side of the Silver Star document page was a page of what the Army calls "General Orders" with an explanation of what had happened on February 15. When I first read it, I said to myself, "They have it all wrong. I was there and all I wanted to do was live." One of the lines in the explanation said, "Sergeant Olints made a quick estimate of the tactical situation and then directed a devastating fusillade onto the insurgents and immediately closed to within fifteen meters of the enemy." My view was that we walked into an ambush. I saw this big tree and felt that the tree was the best place from which to return fire at the enemy. I didn't realize at the time that the tree I had selected was ten feet in front of the fallen point man who had been wounded. Another line of explanation on the paper said: "Sergeant Olints exposed himself to intense enemy fire." My opinion was I walked into an ambush, tried to defend myself from my position behind the tree, and continued firing at the enemy until he disappeared.

Right from the first moment that I read the award I felt very uncomfortable receiving it. Part of me wanted the award, but part of me felt I didn't deserve it.

A year after Vietnam I went to see Sergeant Kevin Kavanaugh and after we had talked awhile, I told him about the award and about how uncomfortable I felt receiving it. He told me that there had been three men lying wounded on the trail during that ambush and the enemy machine gun could have killed all three men. He also said that if I had been one of the three guys lying there on the trail and someone got a Silver Star for running towards that machine gun, I would have been happy for him. I did feel better about the award after talking to him.

In 1985, I applied for and received the Air Medal for more than twenty-five hours of combat flying in a helicopter.

After leaving the Battalion Awards building, I went to the Post Exchange to have my name tag and CIB sewn onto my fatigues. I also bought the ribbons (corresponding with the medals) that a soldier could wear on a dress uniform when he got back in the States. Getting new fatigues, the awards and the ribbons were the first steps in the process of going home.

I never got to say goodbye to the guys in the platoon. The platoon was heading to Da Nang and I wasn't going with them.

Around May 3 I got on a plane and flew from Chu Lai to Cam Rahn Bay. After I arrived, I waited about a day for that Freedom Plane home. The day that I was at Cam Rahn Bay I received a different set of clothes. The Army didn't want anyone flying home in jungle fatigues so everyone going home got a tan uniform. What a waste of taxpayer money, new clothes for a twenty-four hour flight home. The plane that was taking me home was scheduled to take off at midnight on May 4. When I got to the landing strip, there was nothing but darkness and I could just about see the plane. About fifteen minutes before take-off, some lights came on inside the plane. I said to

myself, "Please, God, don't let some NVA blow up this plane." I'm guessing about two hundred soldiers got on the plane and I don't think anyone said a word. We all sat there and couldn't wait for the plane to take off. Finally, the plane started down the runway and in seconds we were in the air. Believe me, there were cheers from everyone.

The only thing I remember about the trip flying back to the States was stopping in Japan to re-fuel. There, for five seconds of my life, I got to look out the window to see Mt. Fuji as the plane headed to Seattle, Washington.

I'm guessing the plane ride from Vietnam to Seattle, Washington was about twenty hours. About a half hour from landing I could feel the plane starting to descend. As the plane was descending, more and more of the guys in the plane stopped talking. It seemed as if everyone was hoping the plane would land as soon as possible. It was dark and I could not see anything out the window. Finally, I was able to see some clouds, and seconds later the plane flew through the clouds and I was able to see the lights of Seattle. What a beautiful sight to see, America.

The plane landed safely, and after getting off the plane, we all had to go through Customs. I guess the Customs officers were looking for drugs and weapons. Not many of the guys on the plane had a CIB (Combat Infantry Badge) on their uniforms. As I was standing in line, one of the inspectors at Customs looked at me and signaled me to come over to him. He said to me, "Anyone with a CIB and a Purple Heart doesn't have to go through Customs." He also told me I could have brought anything I wanted back from Vietnam and it would have been OK with him.

Buses were waiting to take us to Fort Lewis, Washington. I had my infantry training there only fifteen months earlier. Once at Fort Lewis we were assigned to a barracks. In the barracks we had a bed and a mattress, no bed sheets or pillows. We also could take a shower there. We were told that it would take almost a day to process us out of the Army. It was then about two o'clock in the morning and the first thing we did was to go to the mess hall for some food. When we got to the mess hall, there was this big sign that read, "Welcome Home. The Steaks are on us!" The cooks in the mess hall had prepared a meal of steaks, French fries, rolls and milk. It sounded great, but the steaks and French fries had been cooked about four hours before we got to the mess hall. Just picture this, cold and dried-out steaks and French fries with lukewarm milk. Although the "Welcome Home" dinner didn't turn out as the cooks had intended, I couldn't complain because some of my guys came home on stretchers, went straight to a hospital and didn't have a "Welcome Home" dinner.

After the meal we went to be measured for the dress

uniform that we were to wear home, another waste of taxpayer money.

During the day we had classes on our rights as veterans. One class talked about getting back our old jobs if we had been employed at the time of enlistment. All raises and vacation time had to be given to the returning soldier by his previous employer, and all the time that was spent in the Army counted as time spent working on the job. Since I had a job to go back to, this information was important to me.

One of the classes I went to instructed us on how to fill out a form about what we did in Vietnam. Everyone who was not in the infantry wrote down what work they did in Vietnam. All infantrymen had to state on the form that we were security guards in Vietnam. Being ordered to tell that lie really pissed me off.

The Army processing-out physical I had to take was a real joke. We were all in our underwear and had to follow footprints etched on the floor from one station to another to be checked by a so-called doctor. Once the physical was over, we were told that if we had any medical problems we wanted to report, it would take three more days for us to be checked out by a doctor. If we didn't want to wait the three days, then we were to contact the local Veterans Hospital near our hometown.

After the physical we got paid. I made \$340 a month in Vietnam. The Army owed me two months' pay and that came out to \$680, which seemed like a lot of money at the time. I also was given additional money to buy an airplane ticket home. I needed to fly from Seattle, Washington, to Hartford, Connecticut.

In between classes, the physical, and getting paid, I was able to take some short naps. About six o'clock at night on May 5, 1971, I got to take a shower and put on a new Army uniform. In less than an hour, I would be out of the AWrm. I really don't remember the official words that told me I was out of the Army. I do remember someone telling us that buses were waiting to take us to the airport in Seattle. Since we were not in the Army anymore, the cost of the bus ride was three dollars.

Once we arrived at the airport, I bought my ticket home and then sat down with a few Vietnam vets and had a hamburger and French fries. On the table were new types of salt and pepper shakers. None of us could figure out how to use them. All we had to do was turn the top of the pepper shaker and the pepper came out of the bottom. Where had I been for the last two years if I didn't know how to use salt and pepper shakers?

*[Andy Olints served with Co. D, 1/46th Infantry. The final installment of his story will be in a future edition of the Americal Journal.]*



## Book Review

Title: *Unaccounted*

Author: Michael McDonald-Low

Review by Gary L. Noller

On May 5, 1968 enemy forces downed two U.S. helicopters in the Que Son Valley in I Corps, Vietnam. What followed was popularly called the Second Tet Offensive. Like the first Tet Offensive of 1968, American forces eventually rolled back the North Vietnamese attackers. But it came at a heavy cost to both sides.

Michael McDonald-Low went to Vietnam as an Officer Candidate School (OCS) lieutenant and quickly learned the ropes as a platoon leader in Co. D, 1/20th Infantry. He arrived at Qui Nhon, Vietnam, just a few days before Christmas 1967. He and his troops were filled with anticipation as they disembarked from the troop ship that transported the 11th Light Infantry Brigade (LIB) from its stateside base in Hawaii. The author says, "When I walked of the Gordon to join the men of my platoon, I knew my days of easy living were over."

McDonald-Low's unit got its initiation in the fighting that began at the end of January 1968. *Unaccounted* gives a compelling narrative of the day-to-day life of an infantryman in combat. It is comprehensive and concise and flows like a novel. It is chronological in order and well documented by date and location of action. Occasionally the author fast-forwards to future time to reflect back on remarkable experiences of his tour in Vietnam.

Even simple details are brought out in full-color. The following is an example of how the author is able to describe minute details of life in the bush. "Elephant grass could kill you. Elephant grass grew seven feet tall in Vietnam and covered hundreds of meters of jungle terrain. The tall, green blades of elephant grass had edges as sharp as razors. If you were in it and trying to move by cutting or crawling your way through it, the heat and humidity held in the grass would damn near suffocate you."

The author uses a unique technique in telling the story of his platoon. Alternating chapters are told by him and by Clifford Van Artsdalen. The reader gets two views of the same action. One if from the platoon leader, the other is from one of the soldiers in the platoon. As one may expect, the two views are often much different.

The author's choice of Van Artsdalen as co-narrator is very specific. Van Artsdalen is the "unaccounted" in the title of the book. On May 11, 1968 the enemy made a determined stand to eradicate the Americans brought in to counter-attack the Second Tet. Co. D was on the move towards LZ Center when they came under a heavy attack. Van Artsdalen and two others fought from a forward firing position and was seen hit in the head by an enemy round. Several other Americans were killed or wounded in the pitched battle. After a dangerous search was conducted, Van Artsdalen was determined to be Killed-in-Action, Body Not Recovered. The losses for Co. D were tragic- five KIA, seven WIA, and one KIA/MIA.

The author says, "I have taken the liberty of writing for Clifford Van Artsdalen (officially designated by the Defense Department as MIA 1165) in the first person, because I deeply believe this is his story as much as it is mine. I also wanted

to bring him to life so readers would better understand his perspective, duties and combat experiences as that of an enlisted infantry soldier who always tried to do his best. His narrative and portrayal are from my recollections and he is representative of the men serving at that time."

Van Artsdalen was killed in Que Son Valley, sometimes aptly named Death Valley, and normally the area of operations for the 196th LIB. Due to operational needs Co. D, 1/20th, 11th LIB and Co. B, 1/6th, 198th LIB were teamed with other units to find and engage the enemy in the vicinity of LZs Ross, East, Center, and West. The author states, "During the Vietnam War the Que Son Valley region was a very bad place with a very bad reputation. More U.S. Army infantrymen and Marines died there than at any other location in Vietnam. More Medals of Honor were awarded in this region than in any other single combat zone, ever."

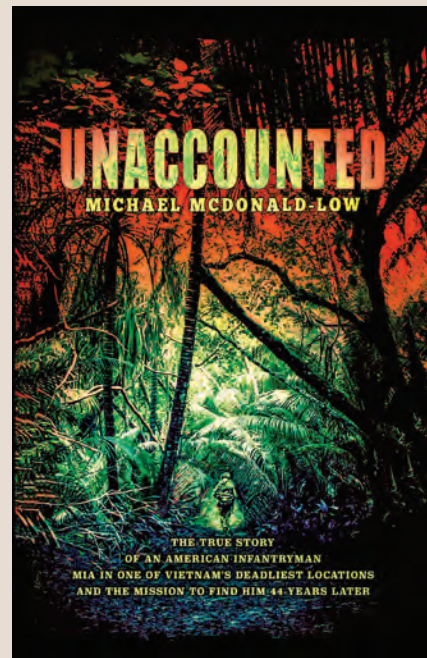
Although Van Artsdalen's body had not been recovered he has not been forgotten by his former commander. McDonald-Low is part of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) and serves as its first ever Southeast Asia Veteran Liaison. In March 2012 McDonald-Low returned to Vietnam with a DPAA team to locate the site of the May 11, 1968 combat action that claimed Van Artsdalen.

The second part of *Unaccounted* tells of this return. At one point the author states, "I turned slowly around and surveyed the small valley and surrounding hills. It was easy to pick out where LZ Center had been located, and I could clearly see the 'saddle' that dipped between it and the nearby hills. It was there that I was going. Other than a small power line I saw that followed the small dirt road through the valley, it all looked the same as it did in 1968."

McDonald-Low and the DPAA team did locate the site of the May 11, 1968 and interviewed local Vietnamese who gave the sketchy but useful information about finding a dead American during the war. The DPAA team found some war relics to include a M-79 grenade shell. Van Artsdalen was a M-79 grenadier with Co. D. McDonald-Low received the grenade shell casing and termed it "as good as a diamond to me."

He is hopeful the casing had belonged to Van Artsdalen and he believes that he "finally had a piece of concrete evidence from his location." He goes on to say, "After forty-four years, I knew the mystery of 11 May 1968, had come to an end for me. I was also transformed from the experience, and I felt the weight of Vietnam begin to lighten on my shoulders."

*Unaccounted* is in soft-cover and has a cover price of \$19.95.



## LAM SON 719

### My Trip Over North Vietnam

By Ron Green

After returning to Dong Ha following my temporary assignment as Liaison Officer to the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry on LZ Shepard, I assumed my duties as the Battalion S-1 of the 6th Battalion, 11th Artillery. During one of my trips to visit the Division Forward at Quang Tri, I discovered that one of my cousins, Captain (CPT) Stanley Bishop, was assigned by the Air Force as a Forward Air Controller at Quang Tri. I detoured by his outfit and found him. Boy, did those Air Force guys have it nice. Their "hootches" looked the same from the outside, but the inside was closed off and had air conditioning. At Dong Ha we were living in an area built for a firing battery of the 5th (Mech) Infantry Division. The troops were living in two 50 man living bunkers, while 11 officers were in a bunker designed for four, kind of crowded for a Headquarters Battery.

When Stan found out that I was an artillery officer, he asked if I would like to ride on a mission with him. He claimed that he was having trouble with his "fire missions," and I might be able to help him. After agreeing on a date and time, I rode back to Dong Ha. The evening before our plane ride, I stopped by the small bar that was one of only two buildings above ground in our area, the other being the

mess hall. The PS NCO, Staff Sergeant (SSG) Christie and the Re-enlistment NCO SSG Titus were there. I think they had been there a little too long, because when SSG Christie bought me one drink, SSG Titus said that he would buy me two. This game continued for sometime. Needless to say, I was feeling rather relaxed when I made it back to the officer's bunker. Doc and I shared the very small bar in that bunker along with a number of mice. My mission that night was to reduce the mice population, but the only thing I could find was a rat trap and C-ration cheese. So, in my inebriated state I began decapitating mice. As you can tell, off duty activities were limited. I finally tired and feel asleep.

The next morning I was "nursing" a cup of black coffee in the mess hall when Bob Speary, the Asst. Commo Officer and Headquarters Battery XO, sat down with me and asked how I liked the rocket attack last night. Those North Vietnamese mice must have really been mad. It was at that moment that I remembered my "in-country" vow to always be in control of my senses.

About half of the S-1 Section accompanied me down to Quang Tri to see if I was really going to go through with this insane flight with a crazy Air Force pilot. When I met Stan, he commented on my "hung over" look and asked if I still wanted to fly. Of course I said, "Yes." While we were being outfitted with survival vests, Stan told the young airman to make sure, "CPT Green has an airsick bag." Upon leaving the storage room, the airman handed me two envelopes. I guess after looking at me, he figured I would probably need more than one.

When we arrived at the OV-10 Bronco (twin engine observation aircraft), the crew chief helped me into the back seat and gave me a briefing on how to eject. This was getting just a little too serious, but the jeep had left me, and I was young and adventurous (stupid was probably a better word.) While Stan was pre-flighting, I read one of the envelopes. It said not to be embarrassed if you get airsick, even the most experienced pilots become airsick.



**The Crew Chief is briefing me on how to eject from the OV-10 Bronco. This is way too serious!**



However, if you feel airsickness coming on, open the bag and have it ready. We weren't off the ground yet, but I was taking no chances, so I opened the bag and put it to the side where I could get it quickly. As Stan got in, he handed me his camera and asked if I would take pictures of the big red flag on the north side of the border. This was going beyond serious now!

We took off and headed north over the border. I don't know if I got the picture of the flag, because it was very bright that day. For the next four hours we flew along the river dividing North and South Vietnam, the tri-borders area, and the Ho Chi Minh Trail. We put in two air strikes, one Navy and the other South Vietnamese. When Stan got ready to spot the target, he would put the plane into a nose down attitude at almost stall speed. He would release the spotter rocket and you could feel it scoot out from under the plane. Then, he would bank the aircraft and give it power. It was fun to watch the fighter-bombers dive on the target. His artillery adjustments were right on target. I don't think he needed any help. Maybe he just didn't want to be alone. Neither did I!

The tri-borders area looked like surface of the moon with all of the craters created by the B-52 Arc Light strikes. Even being several miles away and several thousand feet up, the Ho Chi Minh Trail looked like a superhighway. All of this while the North Vietnamese were saying publicly that the Ho Chi Minh Trail doesn't



**My cousin, Captain Stan Bishop, and I are getting ready to take off from Quang Tri.**

exist. At one point I asked Stan if these guys had surface-to-air missiles. He said, "That's the reason, I'm climbing out." Just a simple "thank you" was appropriate, but I thought, WHAT HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO? I am not sure if the flight was a fast four hours, or I just sobered up quickly. I know that I spent much of my time when not making pictures, hanging my head forward trying to get air from the two fresh air vents. It's a little hard when you're strapped into the ejection seat. Fortunately, I did not have to use the airsick bag nor the ejection seat, and Stan brought us back in one piece. Ours was a relatively routine and safe trip, but I did do a lot of thinking about those Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine air crewmen who were not that fortunate.



**The Ho Chi Minh Trail can be seen from about 5,000 ft. in the air. As close as I wanted to get.**



**The black smoke is the results of the airstrike by two South Vietnamese jets. Go get'um!**

## Meeting Three Former Americal POWs

By Michael Ebert

MACV Advisory Team 16 Tam Ky, 1969

During the latter half of October 1969, there were articles in Stars and Stripes and stories on AFVN Radio news that the National Liberation Front (VC) was going to release one or more US POWs at some undetermined date and location. At about 0930 on the morning of 5 November 1969 I was in the US side of the Province Tactical Operations Center (TOC). A radio message came in on the US Marines Combined Action Company net from Combined Action Platoon 114 located on the southwest outskirts of Tam Ky astride Hwy 533 to Tien Phuoc. The Marine on the radio said they had three now former US POWs in hand. Holy Cow, this is great! The S2 Advisor, Jerry Hamm, USMC CAC Gunny Kalready, and I jumped into a jeep and headed into downtown Tam Ky to Tam Ky District HQ. There we met CPT Herbert Lind, the Tam Ky Deputy District Advisor, who also had a jeep and off we went to CAP 114.

Once there we met the new celebrities, the now former POWs. They were James Strickland, Coy Tinsley, and Willie Watkins. I did not get their names at the time but the S2 advisor did. They looked from what I could see, faces, lower arms, and calves to be in pretty good shape. However, the calves of two of them appeared to be swollen and one also had swollen feet too, probably the result of all the walking in the past several days and nutrition deficiencies. They were wearing the dark green NVA fatigues. I distinctly remember one CAP 114 Marine saying how they damn near shot them but they noticed one had blonde hair and "no gooks have blonde hair" he said.

After a few more moments we had them get into the jeeps and we drove back to Tam Ky to the district HQ. There we sat them down and got them some refreshments, Coke or Pepsi, and a plate full of cookies. Naturally, our interest besides their health status was how long they

had been held, if they knew where they had been held and who else was there. The S2 took whatever names they gave. They advised that most of the time on the move over several days they were blindfolded. That morning for instance, the VC had designees walk them to Hwy 533, take off the blindfolds and point them in the direction of Tam Ky. These "guides" then parted company with them.

As we were conversing with them, suddenly the whup, whup, whup of a Huey filled the air and one landed on the district helipad. Shortly, an Americal major or LTC entered the district HQ, introduced himself and said he was taking charge of these former POWs and directed them out the door to the helipad and one, two, three, the Huey whuped away in a cloud of dust. We had had custody of the ex-POWs for about 45 minutes. The news had spread like wild fire. No doubt the Americal G2 was going to be asking them the same questions we had started to ask.

I always wondered who these ex-POWs were and who were the other prisoners they were with and where they had been held. Finally in 1999, I began to have some time to look into this issue. I found and purchased the books, *Survivors* by Zalin Grant, *Code-Name Bright Light* by George J. Veith, *Conversations With The Enemy* (about POW/turncoat Robert Garwood) by Winston Groom and Duncan Spencer and Frank Anton's story, *Why Didn't You Get Me Out?* All of these provided very helpful information. I corresponded with Frank Anton who provided me with additional helpful information including specifics about the POW camp's sites. It was one camp but it moved to several different sites between 1965 and early 1971.

Through website visits I learned that the effort to locate the remains of MIAs in the 1980s and 1990s had been productive. The advent of GPS positioning has resulted in super accurate grid coordinates that mean you are standing where it says you are. This search effort was helped to no small end by the cooperation and participation of Vietnamese government



officials and veteran VC who were involved with or had direct knowledge of the camp's locations and activities. There were ten US POWs who died while being held there and two German civilian nurses. Another German nurse died en route to the camp. Places where remains were located were in close proximity to the camp's various sites and these received GPS positioning coordinates too. I learned I could access the results of various of these MIA searches via microfiche files available from the Library of Congress and have them sent to my local library and this is what I did. I concluded this investigation in 2003.

As it turns out five of the camp's seven sites were within a 20 sq km area in northwestern Quang Ngai Province. The other two known as D and E are 4.5km and 7.0km roughly south of the campsite known as Camp C. The center of the area of the five camps is roughly 21km SE of where FSB Mary Ann was located, 43km generally SSW of Tam Ky, 54km WNW of Quang Ngai City and 24km W of the Tra Bong Special Forces camp.

During their captivity Eisenbraun, Grissett, Weatherman and Hammond made attempts to escape. All failed. Weatherman was killed by Montagnards upon his apprehension. His death date is based upon the best available information. The others all died in captivity as indicated above.

After an apparent rescue raid on the camp's site in February 1971 that was not executed, the POWs were sent off in two different groups over a period of a week or so on foot heading for the Ho Chi Minh Trail and North Vietnam.

During my research, I counted 42 other apparent US personnel who were seen captive or otherwise went MIA last seen in Binh Dinh, Quang Ngai, Quang Tin and Quang Nam Provinces between 1965 and 1971 who did not come to the MR5 camp. These personnel were not named except for Donald Sparks who was with 3-21 Infantry and went missing on 17 Jun 1969. Sparks was apparently wounded, captured

and subsequently decided to collaborate with the VC/NVA. An NVA Major was killed in an ambush on 17 May 1970 by members of the 198th LIB in the vicinity of Ky Tra, Quang Tin. On his person were two letters written by Sparks on 11 Apr 1970, one to his mother and another to a VC cadre. The handwriting was later confirmed to be that of Sparks. Sparks never returned to US custody and his fate is an unsolved mystery.

Team 16 was involved with one other Americal POW in 1969. Larry Aiken, 3-21 Infantry, was wounded and captured on 13 May 1969. A rallier came to Tam Ky and stated he had worked at the CK-130 Hospital and that a US POW was being treated there. On 10 July, during Operation Lamar Plain, Team 16 personnel along with the Quang Tin Provincial Reconnaissance Unit (PRU) and, the Recon Co of the 5th ARVN Regiment, 2nd Division and air and artillery support from the 101st Airborne Division raided the hospital in the Tram River Valley near to where the No Bu River feeds into the Tram. The hospital was on a hillside at approximately 140m elevation. The grid given is BS198982 and is 9.5km south of LZ Professional. The raiding force had to land several hundred meters away from the site. This unfortunately gave hospital personnel/patients sufficient time to evacuate. Aiken was left at the hospital. It consisted of 10-15 huts with a massive tunnel complex beneath them. When the raiders closed in someone left to watch Aiken smacked him in the head with a machete and escaped. Aiken was evacuated to Chu Lai but passed away from complications of this fresh wound in the hospital on 25 July.

If you have further interest in this topic, you should probably start by trying to locate the books referenced if they are still available or via a library. I found them to be fascinating because they are quite descriptive and detailed as to what day-to-day life was like among the POWs and how they interacted with each other and those who held them.

## Those who were held there and those who survived

The following is a table of US and German personnel who were captured and held/being sent to what was known as the Military Region Five Camp in Quang Ngai Province. It is hoped that for those who perished in captivity the grief of their loved ones has been eased over the passing years. There is no such thing as closure, a term that is popular these days. You always miss and hurt for the one who was lost until your days are done. For those who survived the ordeal of their multi year captivity, I hope they were able to recuperate and lead lives that have been productive and satisfying.

**Rel** = released. **Rtn** = returned to US custody. **NVN** = North Vietnam.

The numbers in the disposition column represent the order of death of those who perished.

Name	Organization	Captured	Province	Disposition
Cpt William Eisenbraun	Sp Forces	5 Jul 1965	Quang Ngai	Died 17 Sep 67 #1
Pvt. Robert Garwood	USMC	28 Sep 1965	Quang Nam	Rtn 22 Mar 79
Cpl Edwin Grissett	USMC	22 Jan 1966	Quang Ngai	Died 27 Nov 68 #6
PFC Luis Ortiz-Rivera	1st Cav Div	27 Dec 1966	Binh Dinh	Rel 20 Jan 68
LCPL Jose Agostos-Santos	USMC	12 May 1967	Quang Tin	Rel 20 Jan 68
Robert Sherman	USMC	24 Jun 1967	Quang Ngai	Died 11 Oct 68 #5
Earl Weatherman	USMC	Nov 1967	Quang Nam	Died 26 May 68 #2
Cpt Dr Floyd Kushner	1st Cav Div	3 Dec 1967	Quang Ngai	Rtn Feb-Mar 73
John Burns	USMC	25 Dec 1967	Quang Nam	Died 2 Jan 69 #8
WO Frank Anton	Americal Div	6 Jan 1968	Quang Tin	Rtn Feb-Mar 73
Robert Lewis	Americal Div	6 Jan 1968	Quang Tin	Rtn Feb-Mar 73
James Pfister	Americal Div	6 Jan 1968	Quang Tin	Rtn Feb-Mar 73
1SG Richard Williams	Americal Div	8 Jan 1968	Quang Tin	Died 27 Sep 68 #4
Frances Cannon	Americal Div	8 Jan 1968	Quang Tin	Died 1-7 Sep 68 #3
David Harker	Americal Div	8 Jan 1968	Quang Tin	Rtn Feb-Mar 73
James Strickland	Americal Div	8 Jan 1968	Quang Tin	Rel 5 Nov 69
Willie Watkins	Americal Div	9 Jan 1969	Quang Tin	Rel 5 Nov 69
James Daly	Americal Div	9 Jan 1968	Quang Tin	Rtn Feb-Mar 73
William Port	Americal Div	12 Jan 1968	Quang Tin	Died 1 Dec 68 #7
Joseph Zawtock	USMC	8 Feb 1968	Quang Nam	Died 24 Dec 69 #12
Dennis Hammond	USMC	8 Feb 1968	Quang Nam	Died 7-17 Mar 70 #13
Thomas Davis	Americal Div	11 Mar 1968	Quang Tin	Rtn Feb-Mar 73
Isiah McMillan	Americal Div	11 Mar 1968	Quang Tin	Rtn Feb-Mar 73
Julius Long	Americal Div	13 May 1968	Quang Tin	Rtn Feb-Mar 73
Frederick Elbert	USMC	16 Aug 1968	Quang Nam	Rtn Feb-Mar 73
Gustav Mehrer	Americal Div	25 Dec 1968	Quang Nam	Rtn Feb-Mar 73
Coy Tinsley	Americal Div	9 Mar 1969	Quang Ngai	Rel 5 Nov 69
Marie Kerber	Ger Nurse	27 Apr 1969	Quang Nam	Died May 69 #9
Monica Schwinn	Ger Nurse	27 Apr 1969	Quang Nam	To NVN Aug 69
Hindrika Kortmann	Ger Nurse	27 Apr 1969	Quang Nam	Died 17 Jul 69 #11
Bernhard Diehl	Ger Nurse	27 Apr 1969	Quang Nam	To NVN Aug 69
Georg Bartsh	Ger Nurse	27 Apr 1969	Quang Nam	Died 14 Jul 69 #10
Jose Anzaldua	USMC	23 Jan 1970	Quang Nam	Rtn Feb-Mar 73





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Membership in the ADVA is open to all officers and enlisted personnel who have served with the 23rd (Americal) Infantry Division in an assigned or attached status during the following periods of service:

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